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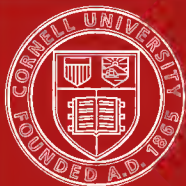
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# OLD CAPE COLONY







JOHAN VAN RIEBEECK, FIRST COMMANDER OF THE  
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.



# OLD CAPE COLONY

A Chronicle of Her Men and Houses

From 1652 to 1806

By MRS. A. F. TROTTER

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TO THE CONSTANT COMPANION OF MY SKETCHING EXPEDITIONS,  
WITHOUT WHOSE SUPPORT ON LONG HOT JOURNEYS  
THIS WORK WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE ;  
BROWN AS THE DUST,  
SILENT AS THE VELD WE TRAVERSED TOGETHER,  
TO MY UNPUNCTURED BICYCLE  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.



## PREFACE

THIS is not a history. It is the outcome of work begun entirely for my own pleasure, wherein I collected all the things about the Colony which interested me personally. These were, the history of the oldest farms, and the earliest settlers, Governors, and Company's men who assisted in naming the country, in drawing up its first laws, and in building its gabled houses. Some of the material was incorporated in a Christmas number of the *Cape Times* of 1898, which I undertook for Mr. Edmund Garrett, then editor. Some of the drawings have been reproduced in a picture book published by Messrs. Batsford, of High Holborn. Some portions of the present book appeared as articles in *Country Life*, and are reproduced by kind permission.

Calamity falls on houses as well as on people. I learn that to several buildings has come, since I drew them, that worst of fates, "modern improvement." I make no apologies for including the drawings of houses that can never be seen again as they stood a few years ago, or for mention-

## PREFACE

ing obscure persons who have been connected with the old story of the Colony. To the pioneers of a new country we after-comers owe too much to allow their names to be entirely lost.

Very little could I have done without the help given me by Mr. H. C. V. Leibbrandt, Librarian of the Houses of Parliament and keeper of the archives of the Cape of Good Hope. With never-failing kindness he specially translated for me certain passages of the archives and papers about which I asked him, and his sheaf of letters have been my most valuable reference, next to his fascinating *Précis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope*, published at Cape Town. I have to thank the friends who helped me translate the old Dutch title deeds and got for me local information and stories. Antiquarian and historical authorities in Holland have also been most kind.

ALYS FANE TROTTER.

*August, 1903.*

# LIST OF CONTENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
I. TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT . . . . .	13

The ship sign of the Dutch East India Company, carved on a stone in The Castle, Cape Town—"Post Office" stone—East India Company's house, Amsterdam—Company's drinking cup—Van Riebeeck and his wife—Very old house in Cape Town—Old Rustenberg summer house—Garden seat, Rustenberg—Table Bay and the Old Fort, after Dapper, 1668.

II. SIMON VAN DER STEL, BUILDER AND GOVERNOR	41
--	----

Coat of Arms of the Six family—View of the Castle, showing the "Kat" and the balcony—Teak Fanlight, once in The Castle—Van Rheeде tot Drakenstein, Heer van Mydrecht—Groot Constantia, 1685—Plan of Groot Constantia—Escutcheons: Groot Constantia and Hottentots Holland—Side gables, groot Constantia—Wine house at Groot Constantia—Wine house steps, Groot Constantia—Old bath, Groot Constantia—Map from the *Voyage de Siam des*

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Pères Jesuites</i> , 1686—Gateway of the Castle, Cape Town—Platte Kloof in the Tygerberg— Very old farm buildings, Koornhoop.—Old districts and modern roads.	
III. THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL. . . . .	93
Wellington—Farm bell, Groot Constantia— Farm bell, Meerlust, Eerste Rivier—Parel Vallei.	
IV. THE ACCUSATION OF WILLEM ADRIAAN VAN DER STEL . . . . .	117
Meerlust, Eerste Rivier—Hen house at Meerlust—Plan of Vergelegen from the "Ac- cusation"—Picture of Vergelegen from the "Defence"—The old octagon wall at Vergel- egen—Vergelegen—The farm bell at Vergel- egen.	
V. EARLY GRANTS OF LAND . . . . .	143
Zwaanswijk—Usual plan of house in the peninsula—Walled river, Elsenberg—Old teak door at Paarde Vallei—Frescoed wall and teak doored fireplace at Libertas—Meerlust, Eerste Rivier—Vredenberg in the Moddergat— Late gable of Vredenberg—Burial Place, Wel- moed—Vergenoegd.	
VI. STELLENBOSCH . . . . .	165
A gate in Stellenbosch—A vine trellised stoep, Stellenbosch—Shutter hinges, Stellen- bosch and Drakenstein—"La Gratitude,"	



# CONTENTS

PAGE

built 1704—Arsenal, Stellenbosch—Very old house in Stellenbosch—A shady street, Stellenbosch.

## VII. DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK . . . 183

Schoongezigt — Good Hope — Rhone and Languedoc—Usual plan of house in the country—Bosch en Dal—Bosch en Dal stoep—Door furniture at Drakenstein and the Cape—Bien Donn , front gable — Bien Donn —Pomegranates at Frenchhoek — Teak china cupboard in a Drakenstein farm—Dauphin —Bochenhouts Kloof—View across Frenchhoek from La Cotte.

## VIII. PAARL. TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND . 207

A quaint gable in Paarl—Old colonial chair once in Paarl Church—Paarl Church—The Parsonage, Paarl — The Drosdty, Tulbagh — Roodezand Pass, Tulbagh Valley—Old Church, Tulbagh—Walls of the Churchyard, Tulbagh—Leeuwfontein—Ceres Bridge.

## IX. MONEY, SHIPS AND CHINA . . . 227

The Dutch East India Company's coins—The shore that has seen so many wrecks.

## X. FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED FOR FIFTY YEARS 241

Sundial in the Company's Garden—Common Seal of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East India Company)—Coat of Arms

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
of Joan Blesius — Klastenberg, Wynberg — Zwaanswijk, built 1711-17—Morgenster, Hot- tentots Holland.	
XI. THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN . . . . .	267
<p>Cape Town Church, from a print — Old Lutheran Parsonage—Steps at Alphen, Wyn- berg — Haazendal in the Bottelary — Gate of the Slave Enclosure, Boshof—Gate of Wel- gelegen, Mowbray—Elsenburg.</p>	
XII. MEN AND HOUSES . . . . .	289
<p>Late window in Cape Town—Old Colonial- made chair—Very old Colonial-made Armoire —Old Colonial bench in “stink-wood”—Ar- molre in “stink-wood” and “yellow-wood”— Bergvliet—The Old Gate to Government House and the Slave Lodge beyond—Stellenberg Gate —Little Terrace at Tokai—Hall at Stellenberg —Tailpiece.</p>	

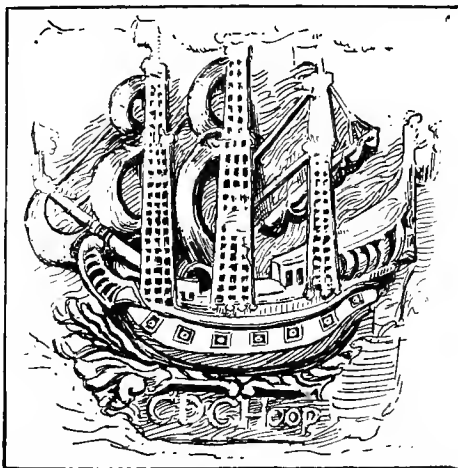
## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT



## I

### Table Bay Settlement

**I**T is true that at first sight Adderley Street, the main thoroughfare of the old "Tavern of the Indian Sea," is as vulgar a street as you can find. Yet I marvel to hear the town always suggested as a smelly, unattractive place in which the visitor has, or has not, found the friend or the information he wished for. Even Adderley Street is backed by the imposing wall of Table Mountain, and



THE SHIP SIGN OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY, CARVED ON A  
STONE IN THE CASTLE, CAPE TOWN.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

beneath the town lie the blue waters of the bay. Know but a little of its history, and the place is transformed for you. Take your choice of periods, none are too distant, and you may visualise with sufficient clearness. You can pass over those early days when the Portuguese explorers feared to land at Table Bay, though they planted commemorative crosses on the western and southern coasts of Africa, and their cartographers drew those delightful sixteenth century maps on which strange beasts fill the vacua of ignorance, and give a cheerful impression of the boundless desert. The four Hollander ships, the forerunners of the East India Companies', sailed in 1595 on their first visit to Java, by the "Portingalles sea cards." So they, too, passed Cape Bona Sperance, and landed at another haven where the inhabitants spoke very strangely—"clocking like Turkey cocks," they said; no doubt having heard the Zulu "clicks."

By this time many of the Hollanders had fallen sick and died, for in crossing the line, they write, "the extreme heat of the ayre" had spoiled all their food. They pushed on to Java, where, falling foul of the Portuguese, who were annoyed that they should "seek to have pepper better cheape," many of their best men were taken prisoner, and rescued with difficulty from the King of Bantam, for "the Portingalles," says the translation of their published book, "could not





MARIA DE QUERELLERI, WIFE OF JOHAN VAN RIEBEECK



## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

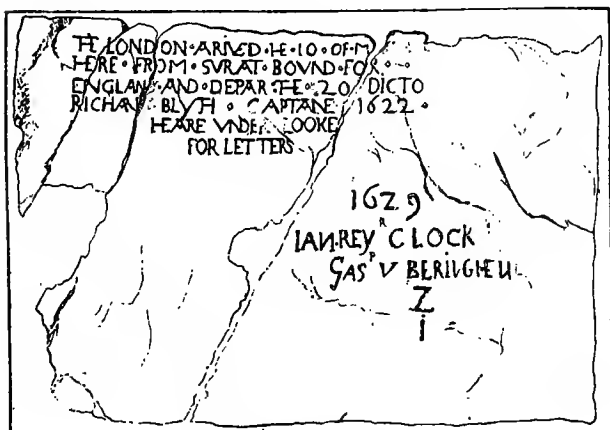
brook" their company. At last they returned home by the "firme lande of Ethiopia," about a hundred miles from the Cape of Bona Sperance, and arrived in April, 1597, their sailors for the most part sick, and two-thirds of the company lost; but bringing with them spices and merchandise of the East, for which up to now they, the middle-men of Europe, had traded with the Portuguese; bartering their Delft-ware, their embroidered quilts, and their silver-handled furniture, on the crowded quays of Lisbon.

Reading the old travellers, one marvels unceasingly at the love of adventure for ever inspiring one set of men to risk their lives for the gain of another. Water was, of course, essential on the long-sailing journeys, and the "sweet water" of Table Mountain soon made Bona Sperance the favourite anchorage for captains on their journey Eastwards. When, in 1600, the Dutch, and a few years later the English, East India Companies were formed, what fleets of spice-laden ships swept into Table Bay! Weary and miserable enough were the men on those gallant-looking vessels; longing for fresh water and fresh meat, and such green food as they might find, and to lay their scurvy-stricken sailors under tarpaulins on the beach.

The passing ships left their letters beneath large stones, tied in secure packets, as I hear is still done in Torres Straits and Magellan. But on the stones and boulders of the shore at Table Bay

## OLD CAPE COLONY

they engraved the name and captain of their ship, and the date of their arrival and departure. It is thought that some ships carried a skilled stone-cutter for the purpose, and these "post-office stones," buried for years, and still found at the Cape, while digging foundations for houses, have for the most part fine lettering. One, now at the entrance of the General Post Office in Cape Town, was unearthed in Adderley Street ; another is in the Cape Town Museum.



" POST OFFICE " STONE.

M. Beaulieu, in 1619, going to Bantam by Table Bay, says : " Some of our men going ashore happened to light upon a great stone, with two little packs of pitch'd canvass underneath, which we afterwards found to be Dutch letters.

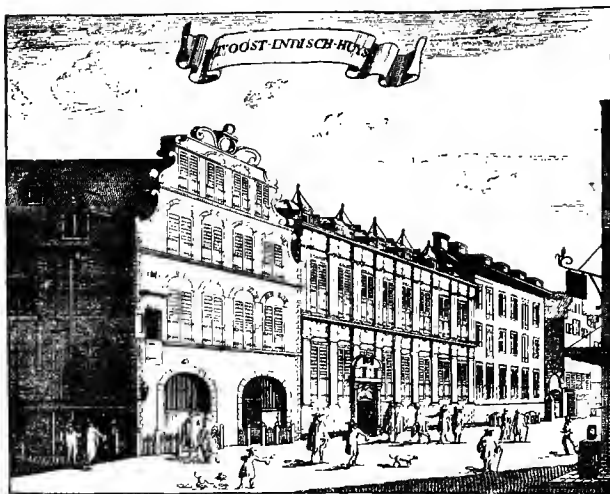
## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

When we opened them we found first a strong piece of pitch'd canvas, then a piece of lead wrapped round the packet, under that two pieces of red cloth, then a piece of red frize, all wrapped round a bag of coarse linen in which were the letters very safe and dry. They contained an account of several ships that had passed that way ; particularly of an English advice boat that was gone to England to acquaint the Company with the injury the Dutch had done 'em in the East Indies. They likewise gave notice to ships that passed that way ; to take care of the natives who had murdered several of their crew, and stole some of their water casks. . . ."

It is wonderful that Portugal should have held the adventure of the east for so many years in her own hands, together with its silks and tea, spices and pepper. Tradition has it that the secret was thrown open to the States of Holland by an obscure merchant from Gouda, Cornelius Houtman, who was detained at Lisbon for debt. All the seafarers of the world now went on the same quest. The English and the Dutch held the largest fleets and disputed the seas, sometimes against each other, and more often against their common enemies. But the Dutch first formed factories and settlements ; and soon Batavia, "Queen of the East," with her tile-paved streets and the water ways, whose unhealthiness caused at last the abandonment of the beautiful old

## OLD CAPE COLONY

town, and the "great and merry canal-rich Island of Ceylon, the most beautiful pearl of the Indian Ocean," as eloquent old Wouter Schouten has it, were to testify in the far ends of the earth to the curious artistic taste of the not too scru-



EAST INDIA COMPANY'S HOUSE, AMSTERDAM  
(From Commelin's *Beschryving der stad Amsterdam*, 1693.)

pulous trader of the Netherlands. The tombstones of these distant settlements, where men and women died young, are interesting and pathetic reading, and record many names familiar at the Cape; whilst at home were unloaded "the strange and rich wares of other countries," for which the pioneers had sought. "So as they

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

should not be brought unto them by strangers," they had said, "but by their own countrymen, which some would deem to be impossible, and rather esteem it madnesse than any point of wisdom, and folly rather than good consideration." The impossible had come true. At Middelburgh, at Veere, at Amsterdam, most stately houses were built in which the "fine Indian wares" were unshipped, and where business was gorgeously transacted.

The administration of the Dutch East India Company consisted of six Boards or Chambers. The most considerable, that of Amsterdam, had twenty-four directors, eight chosen by the magistrates of Amsterdam, and two by the Provinces of Gelderland and Friesland. The second chamber was that of Middelburgh, where the work of the Directors was carried on half the year. It is said that the town and the country round supplied the greater number of seafarers for the ships. This Chamber consisted of twelve Directors chosen by the cities of Zeeland, and one by Gelderland. The other Chambers were that of Delft, which included one representative from Overysse; Rotterdam, including one from Dort; Hoorn, which had one from Alkmaar; and Enkhuizen, of which one was nominated by the nobles of Holland. But the supreme control was invested in the Assembly of Seventeen, of which eight were deputed from the Chamber of Amsterdam, four

## OLD CAPE COLONY

from Middelburgh, and one from each other Chamber, including one alternatively from the specially nominated towns. There was also a



COMPANY'S DRINKING CUP, INSCRIBED :  
" DE GESONTHEYDT VAN DE VADERLANDSE VRINDEN."

Council of the Directors, through which the Company communicated with the States General.

We all know that in 1652 the Dutch Company resolved to found a victualling station for their

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

vessels at Table Bay. Then landed the first Commander of the Cape, Johan van Riebeeck, and his wife, Marie de Querelleri. They established themselves ashore under miserable shelters, and van Riebeeck set his handful of men, Company's sailors and soldiers, to work. The first act was to dig foundations for a wooden fort; the second was characteristically Dutch: they made a canal with sluices, with which a moat round the fort could be filled; the third was to begin the kitchen garden which was before long to be an important influence in the history of the world.

The Commander himself is an interesting personality. His father, Antonius van Riebeeck, was a seafarer, who died in the Brazils in 1639, and was buried in the church of San Paolo at Olonda de Pharmambuco. Johan had already been in Formosa, China, Japan, the West Indies and Greenland. He is said to have been a ship's surgeon, and there is certainly a smack of science about some of his observations. His wife, Marie de Querelleri, is first of a long line of intrepid women pioneers, of whom we only know that they came to the Cape, and there had children, and lived or died as the case may be. Her son, Abraham van Riebeeck, born at the Cape in 1653, rose in 1709 to be Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies: the most important post in the gift of the Company.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

The Fort was designed with wooden walls, and within the enclosure were wooden living houses, and a large dining hall. The four points of the fortification were named after the four ships in the Bay, the *Dromedaris*, the *Reiger*, the *Walvis*, and the *Oliphant*, and the yacht *Goede Hoop* gave her beautiful title to the whole building.

It was the end of summer, and no herbs could be found for the sick. The earth was too dry for cultivation, and when the south-easter wind blew the workers on the ramparts were choked with dust. The hungry men were thankful to kill a hippopotamus or two, for the natives would not supply cattle ; and the stores had to be saved for the ships. Later came the rains ; the labourers, ill with scurvy and fever, were hardly able to work. " Life is growing a misery," says the journal kept for the instruction of the Company, " but we trust in God's mercy." In the midst of their distress arrived the ship *Hof van Zeeland* with a record of thirty-seven dead, of whom three, sub-merchant Nancius and three others had jumped overboard in despair. And not long after, the first European child was born.

To this day Cape Town owes its disposition to Van Riebeeck's plan. The " gardens " in which Government House and the South African College are built are the remains of the Company's garden. The canal into which he conducted the fresh river from the face of Table Mountain is now meta-



## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

morphosed into Adderley Street. The present "Castle" of Cape Town, built for the Dutch Governors and Company's officials, is not far from the site of the old wooden Fort. If you are going to Cape Town, walk down Waterkant and Riebeeck Streets ; they are the oldest quarters of the town. To ensure against their being blown



VERY OLD HOUSE IN CAPE TOWN.

down in the raging south-easterly winds, the first houses were one-storied—rude enough in building, I daresay—and heavily thatched with reeds cut on the Lion Hill. After several terrifying fires, caused, it was thought, by sparks from the pipes of the sailors, flat roofs were used. You may come on an old flat-roofed house, forgotten in a corner of the town, which still keeps its divided door,

## OLD CAPE COLONY

designed to shut out straying animals, and decorated with some rude ornamentation. Such houses are of as early a date as you can find among the streets. For long the part between Orange and Wale Streets was called the Compagnie's Tuyn—Company's Garden.

The gallows and the wheel of torture, shown in later maps, did not at this early date become an important feature of the town. In a volume called *The Regions of Africa*, published in 1688 by Dr. Dapper (who had received a privilege from the States of Holland and West Friesland to make extracts from other books—a mode of authorship still extant, and now exercised without such sanctions), he says of the Cape: "At the foot of the mountain is the Fort of the East India Company, fortified by cannon, standing in a square enclosure, so strong that an army of 100,000 Hottentots only could take it. There is a large garden with different plants and fruit trees, various plantations on the other side of the mountain. . . . Round the Fort are several houses belonging to Hollanders, free burghers who worked on their own lands. But though free, they have to give part of their produce to the Governor, it being to the advantage of the Company that they [he ?] should be thus profited."

Despite their splendid qualities, I cannot help thinking those early settlers unpractical. In the midst of semi-starvation, and much misery from

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

insufficient shelter and attacks from wild beasts, we find them requisitioning from home one hundred pairs of silk stockings. Bread was sent from Amsterdam, arriving mouldy and uneatable. There is the flavour of an Irish bull in the demand for forty or fifty cotton blankets, which were to be placed in silk bags to make feather beds for the men. Another request is for arrack to treat the natives, who were "much pleased and drawn nearer by it."

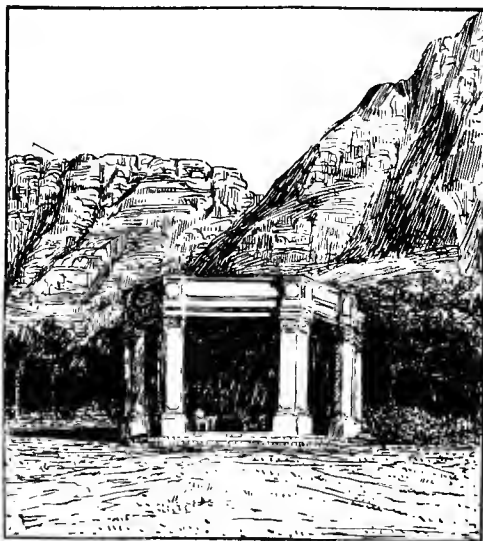
Van Riebeeck did good work. The garden prospered, though he was sorely vexed at his failure to grow parsley—still a difficult thing to raise on the peninsula. So did the vines he planted on the leeward side of the mountain at his farm of Boscheuval, mentioned long afterwards in the Company's journal as one of the most beautiful places at Table Bay. Boscheuval is now known as Bishops court, where the palace of the Archbishop of Cape Town is built; and the Wine Mountain, on the eastern side of which the village grew up, was named Wijnberg by the Commander when he planted his first Muscatel grapes. After a very few years Wouter Schouten tells us that the Company's garden grew not only all the fruits from home, such as apples, pears, and nuts, but many East Indian trees and plants brought from Batavia, and mentions that besides pot-herbs and spices, many fine cabbages, carrots, lettuces, radishes, and water melons were brought

## OLD CAPE COLONY

to the ship. Corn was at first grown at the garden in Cape Town, but it never prospered, and the south-easter winds blew the dry grain out of the husk. So a second plantation of grain was made not far from the small fort on the Liesbeeck River, and called Koornhoop. The corn hoped for was not very successful; and Batavia, forced by a paternal Government to accept supplies from Table Bay, revenged herself by making unpleasant remarks about it, as you may read for yourself in Leibbrandt's translations of the Company's journal. A second and more satisfactory Company's garden was made on the adjoining land near the Rondebosch or Round Wood, and the produce was stored, together with the corn, in the Groote Schuur or Great Barn. I believe the foundations and arches of the old barn were distinctly traced in rebuilding the present beautiful house. A second residence for the Commander, or Company's House, where distinguished visitors, Company's inspectors and the like, were lodged, was built near by and called Rustenberg. The old buildings were all burnt except a summer house and two charming old seats made of brick, plastered and whitewashed like all the old Colonial work. They stand on the grounds of the modern Groote Schuur, in the shadows of the mountain behind. When they were built, lions and leopards lurked not far off amongst the rocks and crevasses; wild cats from the great forest of undergrowth

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

around made nightly depredations in the homesteads; on the sandy stretches below were the rude huts of some of the lowest native races ever known, now for the most part died out. A herd of elephants, or of zebras, might have been seen

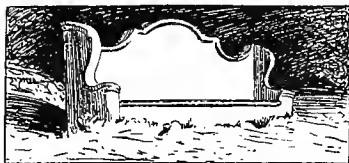


OLD RUSTENBERG SUMMER HOUSE.

moving over the plain, and in the squelching pools of the low-lying ground wallowed many a hippopotamus. Yet more than one old "Company's man" has sat on those seats and gazed at the clear blue of the sky and the far-off outline of the unchanging mountains as you and I may do to-day.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

From the first van Riebeeck realized that want of labour would be one of his chief difficulties, and he prayed the Directors to send Chinese emigrants to make bricks and tiles. Slaves were badly wanted for the rougher work. He asked leave from Batavia to keep the yacht *Goede Hoop* at Table Bay, so as to explore the coast with this end in view, and he begged for the notes of Commander van der Stel, father of the future Governor of the Cape, who had been to



GARDEN SEAT, RUSTENBERG.

Madagascar and “there made a good thing in slaves.”

In 1654 the vessel *Tulp* returned from Madagascar, having made terms with the King of Antogil, who had, it appeared, undoubtedly loved the Commander van der Stel. Fortunately, too, on the arrival of the ship the king had been suffering from a dose of poison administered by one of his subjects, and the ship's barber had succeeded in saving his life; so that he was disposed to grant favours. “The opportunity offers itself,” says the journal, “to make such

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

arrangements . . . as to secure all the rice in the island, and so leave the French in the lurch ; ” for the French, it continues, go there to gather hides and to have a refreshment station for their Red Sea pirates.

In the year 1657 the entire population of Table Bay was only 134 persons, including the Company’s men, a few retired servants of the Company, the women and children. There were only eight slaves. In the following year a Dutch slaver, the *Amersfoort*, captured a Portuguese slaver, and brought the survivors of the 236 captives to the Cape.

It was a hard life, that of the first settlers, who, as an early traveller puts it, had to “ dig a sluice, sow and mow, plough and plant ” in order to get the land into better order ; who lived in miserable little houses, which were cold enough on the winter nights, having only glass in the windows of the one best room ; and who were half naked into the bargain. The community had a certain desperate element, too, which made terrific punishments necessary. We hear of a deserter being keelhauled, while he and another had to work in irons for two years ; of a sailor who was condemned to fall from the yardarm and receive fifty cuts ; and so on. Soldiers and sailors were often half starved, as the stores of bread and rice had to be economised for the Company’s ships ; and the Company’s garden required

## OLD CAPE COLONY

jealous guarding. A law was made a year after the foundation of the settlement which gave two years in irons as a penalty for robbers. Later it was enacted that no one might enter the garden save members of Council and the principal officials of the fleet. For the first trespass twenty-five lashes were given ; for the second, fifty, with a fine of two dollars ; whilst to meddle with a fruit tree entailed forfeiture of all personal liberty and goods. The Company's men very much disliked the killing and flaying of the seals at Saldanah Bay and Dassen Island ; but good profit it must have been for the Company, and for this reason van Riebeeck implores the men not to mind a little dirt and smell. Young seals were so abundant that they could be picked up by hand, and a ship freighted with them, and in one catch 2,733 skins were secured.

Gradually the cattle, fowls, and pigeons increased, and the green grew more plentiful, so that it was no longer necessary to " fill five casks with penguins to save the cabbages," a diet against which we are not surprised the men rebelled, saying that they would all lie down flat and refuse to do any work ; or break the necks of the officers. Gifts of Dutch cheese and butter, and Spanish wine, had softened the hearts of the " Hottentoots," as they called the natives. Those who had good supplies of cattle grew less hostile and more willing to trade, and the Saldanhas



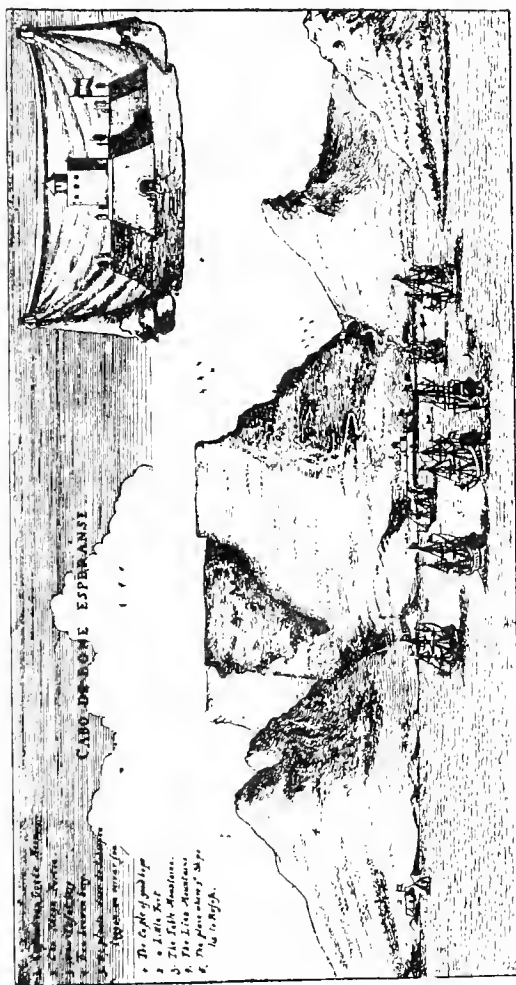


TABLE BAY AND THE OLD FORT, AFTER DAPPER, 1668.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

brought copper and ivory to barter. "Hottentoots" were not, however, an unmixed blessing in the community. They killed the herds in lonely places and pilfered the unarmed people. They coaxed the children on one side in order to cut the brass buttons off their clothes; and the mothers of this far-off settlement felt justly aggrieved at the irreparable damage. For none of these offences could punishment be meted to a native, for the Directors, whose policy was solely a policy of trade, had proclaimed that "Whoso ill treats, beats, or pushes any of the natives, whether he be in the right or wrong, shall, in their presence, be scourged with fifty lashes in order that they may perceive that such conduct is against our will." In 1673 a man was banished to Robben Island, then to Batavia, and thence to the new penal settlement of Mauritius, for "wantonly shooting and mortally wounding a Hottentot." And this although the man (who was called Willem Willems) had escaped from the Company in a Danish ship, and returned with what purported to be a pardon from the Prince of Orange. For such discipline the chief reason of the Commander was that settlers should "not give rise to any new disturbance amongst the Hottentots, who are a people revengeful beyond all comparison." After all, the Directors at home might not have objected to a little more rough handling had it been

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

unauthorized by them ; at one time Commander Wagenaar says that he has been recommended to wink at it all by the masters in the Fatherland.

The settlement must have been a good deal set back by the danger of any place at all isolated ; cultivators outside the circle immediately round the Fort took their lives in their hands. " The garden Rustenberg, otherwise called Rondebosje," was in 1676 tilled by two men, H. Thielman and Hendrik E. Smidt, for 4,000 guilders annually, but Thielman was massacred by the Hottentots. Governor Goske stated that agriculture had been retrograding in consequence of the difficulties with murderous tribes. He proposed, as soon as the new Castle was complete, to lodge the Madagascar slaves, who were an industrious set of people, at Hottentots Holland, to defend the corn land and cattle from the attacks of natives. Compared to the terrible experiences of American pioneers with the warlike Indians, the adventures of the Cape are insignificant. Still, it was a plucky set of men who started on their gabled homesteads in wilds peopled by the most degraded set of savages ever known—cunning, dirty, and utterly without tradition or the most primitive code of morality. Some protection to the boers was given by the three watch-houses along the Liesbeeck river, represented on early maps of Table Bay. Theal says they were called respectively "Turn the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Cow," "Hold the Bull," and "Look Out." Less poetic, the names remind one of the naming of the three great dykes, one inside the other, the "Watcher," the "Sleeper," and the "Dreamer," which stand between Holland and the perpetual beat of the North Sea waves.

Excursions were gradually made inland. The mountain of the Paarl was named the "Pearl and Diamond" mountain, from the granite lump atop which glistens in the sun; "Klapmuts," or "Sailor's Cap," was the nickname of the conical hill which served as a place of outlook or defence against native invasions, and which is now so well known as a favourite meeting place for the Cape Hunt Club. We hear of few diversions, and those are sombre enough. The sailors dabbled with black art to discover who had thieved their belongings, and perhaps as a form of amusement. "Has Cornelis Oldrichson taken or mislaid my ring? If so, turn thyself round in God's name," says the mate of the *Roode Vos*, striking on his Testament with a key. "At first," says the surgeon who related the story to his superiors, "the Testament remained motionless, but after the third question it turned round by itself." The surgeon was frightened, and cried, "Mate, this has not been done by your will." But the mate said, "Look well," and the Testament went on turning. Then said the surgeon, "I wish for a dollar that I did not see it."

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

At last, in 1662, Van Riebeeck, who outstayed his contract of five years, moved on to Malacca, where his wife died, and where he married again a daughter of the Commissioner Gruys, who was killed on the west coast of Sumatra. It is thought that the East Indian prisoners kept in chains at the Cape about 1667 were concerned with this murder. He afterwards returned to Batavia, where he died and was buried in the Groote Kerk, with this inscription on his tombstone : " Hereunder lies buried the Honble. Mr. Johan van Riebeeck, first founder of the Colony of Cabo de Bona Esperance, and ex-president of Malacca, lately Secretary to the High Government of India. Died the 18th Jan., 1677, 58 years old."

For seventeen years after van Riebeeck's departure, the Cape was at a standstill. A few tracts of land were cultivated ; we hear that a Pieter Visagie and Jan Mostert, names still known at the Cape, owned land in the Tygerberg or Leopard Mountain, the long low hill facing Table Mountain. About there also the Company used to cut hay ; for the sandy tract now covered with brushwood, protea, and the gummy sapped mesembryanthemum, then waved with coarse grass, and I do not know that any good explanation has been given for the change. But the efforts of the Governors were confined to the building of a castle which was to replace van

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Riebeeck's wooden fort, now dilapidated and considered inefficient. Wouter Schouten says in 1658 that the fort had a "church where the word of God was preached," but according to Theal, the large hall decorated with skins was the only church. It had a stuffed zebra at the entrance, and the attractive beast was removed before the service began, lest the attention of the congregation should be diverted. Increasing trade had brought increasing rivalry, and a stronger fort was certainly necessary, for the whole structure threatened to crumble away during the rains. The English were considered a special source of danger, though they occasionally arrived with an open letter from the directors of the Dutch Company saying that hostilities had ceased, and that they were to be well treated. The officers were then entertained at dinner, and went on board at night, in the words of the journal, "pretty sweet and jolly, and well pleased." The building work progressed only when danger seemed imminent, and languished in the intervals. One of the Company's best men, Governor Goske, was sent out to begin this new fort or castle, and laid the foundation stone in 1666. But he was soon withdrawn. His successor, Governor Bax, is said to have stopped every one who passed and made them carry one basketful of earth for excavating the moat.

A more stirring time was to come. In the old

## TABLE BAY SETTLEMENT

crowded countries inaction often appears more useful than energy ; so much work has already been done, so many results are developing slowly, and shaping themselves on the lines of least resistance, that a sudden movement may precipitate matters and destroy more than it creates. In newer, cruder surroundings it is the man himself, the leader of imagination, who must invent what is to be developed ; and a single individual of power may give his own bias to a chapter of history. In 1679 the command of the Cape was offered to Simon van der Stel, who was in the employ of the Dutch Company in Amsterdam ; son of the Commander van der Stel already mentioned. The settlement was an unimportant one, but he accepted the post and sailed for Table Bay. I can almost imagine his arrival at the jetty below the old fort. How curiously he must have scanned the handful of houses that formed the little town, the rude canal, the strip of green garden above. Did he realize that his feet would never leave that sandy shore, and that his name would be identified with the place for ever ?





SIMON VAN DER STEL, BUILDER  
AND GOVERNOR



## II

### Simon Van Der Stel, Builder and Governor

WHEN, in the year 1679, Simon van der Stel was appointed by the Dutch East India Company to the command of Table Bay Settlement, it was still a mere victualling station. Still must it have been as van Riebeeck described it, "a lonesome and melancholy place where there was nothing to be done but barter cattle with the lazy and filthy Hottentots." Along the shore was the town of the first commander and a few Hottentot huts, and near the more distant forts was the Company's garden of Rustenberg, with its agricultural lands and Great Barn. A cattle station was also at Klapmuts. Few people would have been bold enough to prophesy that, under the influence of Simon and his son, the country around would become covered with graceful homesteads, and that, in speaking of old houses at the Cape, the name of van der Stel would instinctively rise to the lips. The family of the commander were all "Company's men."

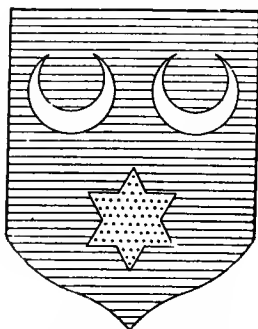
## OLD CAPE COLONY

Captain Adriaan van der Stel, his father, had been commander of the Mauritius Settlement; he succeeded the first commander, Pieter de Geyser, in 1639, in which year Simon was born there. Simon's second son, Adriaan, became in 1705 Governor of Amboyna. On that part of Wynberg now called "Waterloo Green," below the camp and where the Dutch and English Churches and the Roman Catholic Convent are now built, there was an old farm, probably once covering the whole district, called De Oude Wijnberg, which in 1720 belonged to burgher Conraad Feit, who made a memorial that it had been granted in 1683 to this Adriaan van der Stel. The eldest son, Willem Adriaan, held two posts at the Cape in 1680-83, and, after a short interval as magistrate of Amsterdam, succeeded his father as Governor. His third son, Cornelis, was lost in an East Indiaman, the *Ridderschaap*. The youngest, Franz, took up some of the Company's land, and how he fared I shall speak of later. Simon's wife, Johanna Jacoba Six, was daughter of Caterina Hinlopen and Willem Six, one of the great Amsterdam family, the friends and patrons of Rembrandt. A Johan Six was burgermaster of Amsterdam in 1578. The Hon. Joan Six, to whom many payments are noted in the Cape archives (to be transmitted by him to Mrs. van der Stel), was married to one of the Tulps, but to what relation of the celebrated Dr. Tulp, of

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson," I have not been able to find out. Simon's wife never came to the Cape. Kolbe, the inaccurate historian, who hated the van der Stels, writes that she was "not so complaisant as to follow her husband into Africa," and wrongly adds that her name was Constantia.

All the poetry and interest of the Cape Penin-



COAT OF ARMS OF THE SIX FAMILY.

sula, and of much of the country further afield, is identified with the van der Stels. They had a genius and passion for making beautiful places to live in—dwellings of grave and quiet beauty nestling amongst trees. We reap the benefit of their taste, the van der Stels suffered for it; and so immeasurably do these old buildings gain by the tender shade of the oak trees they planted—trees found almost exclusively near the "van der Stel farms"—that if for no other reason, a tribute

## OLD CAPE COLONY

is due to their memory. Simon van der Stel himself has many monuments: the leafy town of Stellenbosch, with its thatched and gabled houses, set amongst fantastic mountain ridges, was founded by him. The beautiful site he chose on one of his first expeditions, the long streets, drowsy with the monotonous sound of their tiny tinkling streamlets, were planted by his orders. The name of his family is recorded in the name he gave it—his own; in the serrated peak so noticeable from the Cape, Simonsberg, the last mountain to hold the flash of sunset. Simon's Bay, too, familiar to us of the twentieth century, is called after this Governor of the seventeenth who first explored it.

I do not know why historians, with the exception of Mr. Leibbrandt, have done him such scant justice, for the work of no other commander is at all comparable. He explored, he planted, he built. Of his house in the Company's garden (not far from the present Government House) we have a description from the visitors he lodged in it. His hospital on the canal, of which we shall hear later, was considered very fine. Here, say the archives, the free blacks might bring to the patients all sorts of food, whether "pastry cakes or apple tarts." Simon took in hand, on arriving, the dusty unfinished beginnings of the Castle, covered with sand blown off the beach; and in a very short time

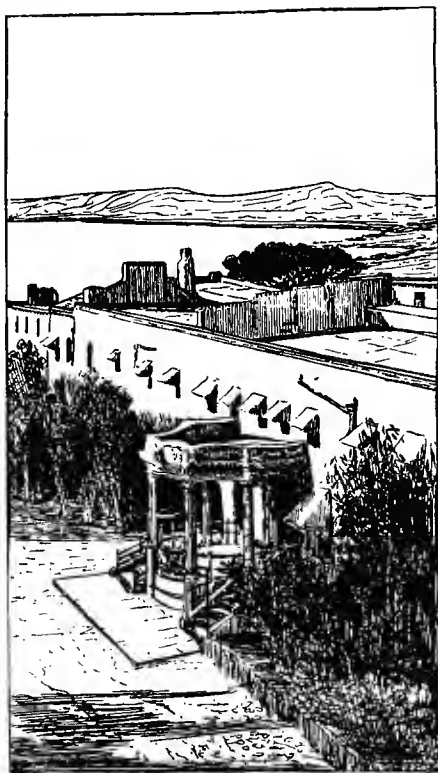
## SIMON VAN DER STEL

we hear of the dwelling house within the fortifications which he built. The materials were brought from the Fatherland. In Commissioner de Mist's time there was a tradition that the woodwork and beams of this part of the Castle were made of "iron trees," as they were called, which grew on the slopes of Table Mountain, and which were considered indestructible. But by this time we know, from experience, that the wood is most perishable.

Simon was specially responsible for the Governor's House and the block of buildings next it, connected by a great archway, which was the house of the *Secunde* or chief merchant: a handsome place, now used for military offices, which in its day was the centre of all the official life of the settlement. The Council held their meetings in the large hall, in which a church service was held on Sundays, and the balcony, with its beautiful little ironwork balustrade, was a prominent factor, as here the *placaats* or orders of Council, which formed practically the laws of the little community, were displayed from time to time; and from it the Governors made speeches to the assembled burghers. The whole block was called the "Kat" or Cat, and always spoken of as such in the despatches. The word was also used for a defence or rampart. Probably the *Secunde's* dwelling was not finished for some years, as we hear in the despatches

## OLD CAPE COLONY

that the Chief Merchant Elzevier had a house adjoining the wall of the burial ground which



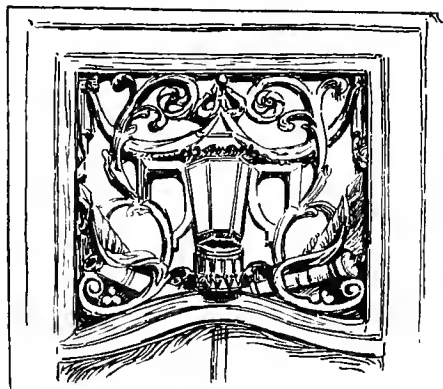
VIEW OF THE CASTLE, SHOWING THE "KAT" AND THE BALCONY.

then surrounded the foundations of the unfinished church.



## SIMON VAN DER STEL

It is said that Simon himself designed the gateway of the Castle, which in the original plan had faced the sea, considering it safer to make the opening towards Signal Hill, where there was a post of look-out for the ships. It is ornamented by the monogram of the Company, and under the pediment are the arms of the



PEAK FANLIGHT, ONCE IN THE CASTLE.

different towns of the Netherlands which had a share in the Directory. All these buildings were official, and the designs were probably supplied by the Company's architects. The Castle indeed has much the same character as the old gateways and Dutch Company's Houses in Ceylon.

In 1682 Governor-General Ryklof van Goens, Governor of Batavia, invalided from the Indies,

## OLD CAPE COLONY

stopped at the Cape on his way home to recruit the ship and inspect the settlement. As he is mentioned in the history of the Cape, it may be interesting to note his adventurous career. A fine, truculent gentleman in his pictures, he had put in many years' good service to the Dutch East India Company. In 1661 he had led the first expedition to Cochin against the Portuguese, who were ousted in 1663. During the war between Holland and England he had threatened Bombay with a fleet of 6,000 men, and captured two English ships off Musilipatam. Later, during the Dutch and English alliance, he in 1674 recovered St. Thomé from the French. By the time he arrived at the Cape Commander van der Stel had founded Stellenbosch, which van Goens visited. Civilization was gradually advancing outside Table Bay settlement, and there were outposts of the Company at the Cuylen or Pools, Diep River, Riet Vlei and Vissers Hoek. The origin of this Cape word "vlei" has been a good deal discussed, meaning, as it does there, a pool or lake. It was probably first intended for vallei or valley, but has been corrupted and somehow retained where water lay in the valley, while "vallei" is used in the ordinary sense.

In 1684 the younger Ryklof van Goens, Councillor of India and Governor of Ceylon, arrived. Seven years earlier he had buried at Ceylon his

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

wife Jacomina Ropsegaarde ; the year following his second wife, Esther de Solemne. He lodged at the Company's House of Rustenberg, where he lay ill nearly the whole of his stay. Under his inspection a few changes were made amongst the officials of the Cape. Johannes de Grevenbroek, afterwards a bitter enemy of the van der Stels, was appointed Secretary of Council. His signature is familiar on many an old title-deed. Van Goens developed a great affection, says Theal, for the younger Adriaan van der Stel, who had been Issuer of Stores at the Cape, and gave him a grant of land, and the rights of a full burgher ; permission also to catch fish in False Bay, and to have a fowling net, and to shoot any game or birds he pleased. The order was approved by Council ; but it gave a great deal of dissatisfaction to the farmers, who were only allowed each of them to shoot in one year one rhinoceros, one hippopotamus, one eland, and one hartebeeste, and for more than this had to apply for special leave. It was the first expression of discontent with the van der Stels. There was yet another member of the family in the employ of the Company at the Cape at this time—Lodewyk van der Stel, who seems to have been a relation of Simon's, but not one to be proud of, as he was connected with the fraudulent proceedings of the cashier and cellar-master, Gerrit Vieroot, who was dismissed the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Company's service with heavy fines. In the journal of 1689 the Governor complained of his neglect in not making out monthly statements. In the same year Lodewyk was made an elder of the church. We hear in 1693 that he obtained promotion and went on with his family to India.

Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee de tot Drakenstein, Lord of Mydrecht, touched at Table Bay in 1685 on his round to the East Indies. He had with him a commission of three other directors, and was about to examine into the affairs of the Company in Hindustan and Ceylon. He inspected all the public bodies: the Burgher Council, the Matrimonial Court, the Board of Militia and the Orphan Chamber, and, to the credit of the Commander, made no alterations. A great man in his way, botanists still remember him as the Governor of Malabar who published twelve illustrated folio volumes, entitled *Hortus Malabricus*; splendid books, full of careful drawings and dissertations by various experts printed in Arabic and Dutch. It is dedicated, amongst others, to "Johanni Huddi Heer van Waeveren, and Director of the East India Company," and "Ægido Valkenier Consuli et Senetori urbis Amstello." The latter is either the same, or one of the same family as the Commissioner Valkenier, who in 1700 granted to Simon van der Stel the grazing rights of the Steenberg. His coat of arms were, together with those of the

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

Six, van Loon, Hoorn, Tulp, van Outshoorn, and many other families connected in some way with the Cape, emblazoned on the great window of the Oude Kerk at Amsterdam. The name of van Rheede, who, by the by, signs himself "van Reede tot Draackesteyn," in variance with the usual spelling, appears many times in the Company's journal and in the books of eighteenth century travellers. He was buried at Surat under a splendid monument, which may exist still; it was kept in repair at the expense of the Company, at one time six thousand rupees or nine thousand Dutch guilders being spent on it.

Van Rheede was on friendly terms with Simon van der Stel, whose schemes for the acclimatization of plants must have interested him. From the earliest times the Governors had been allowed to acquire land. Van Riebeeck, as we know, had planted vines on his farm. Crudorp was given, while Governor, the freehold of some land he had cultivated in Table Valley. Governor Wagenaar, too, had owned a "certain square piece of land, . . . with houses, stables, and plantations," which lay between the Castle and the town. Van Rheede tot Drakenstein granted to Simon van der Stel 891 morgen (about 1,782 acres), probably as a natural and obvious way of rewarding him for his services, and giving him a stake in the country; but in later times

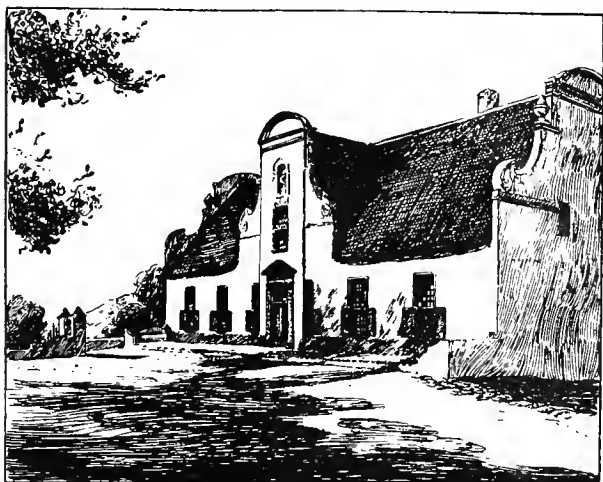
## OLD CAPE COLONY

it was suggested by those who disliked the van der Stels that he had been bribed into so doing by the Governor, who named after him the beautiful tract of country beyond Stellenbosch.

There is outside Cape Town a pine-bordered road, dusty with soft red dust, as romantic a highway as you could wish. You will find it past Newlands, once the New Lands reclaimed from the mountain-side, or through Wynberg, the old Wine Mountain of the early settlers. It leads you (rather breathless if you have come up the hill on a bicycle) to the vineyards of Groot Constantia. Far off to the south-east stretches the Muizenberg Plain, with its lines of shimmering sand and the pool of the Zee Koe Vlei; beyond that the sea and the serrated mountains lessening to the rocks of Hanglip Point. It was not without care that the old Governor chose this piece of land on which to make his home. A man told Admiral Stavorinus in 1798 that his father had helped to test baskets of earth taken up along the shore every hundred rods over a great tract of country, and mixed with water, for the Governor to decide upon its quality. Here, well satisfied with the richness of the soil, he built a house with a stoep and a great hall. Gabled like the houses of the fatherland, it resembles the Dutch farm houses on the island of Walcheren, houses with interiors like those of Pieter de Hoogh's pictures, designed,

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

some say, with a reminiscence of the Malay Archipelago, yet not entirely like any, but individual and distinct : the first great homestead of the Cape. Few of the many visitors to Constantia trouble their heads about the man who planned, more than 200 years ago, to make a home on the



GROOT CONSTANTIA, 1685.

mountain slopes, who cleared a space for his vines and his gabled house amongst the wild geraniums, the gladioli, and the lilies. Yet what a place it is to dream in ! Below lies False Bay, and the wonderful brilliance of its sandy shores ; behind, the steep pass of the "Nek" and the rocky heights above Hout Bay. Here, on a still

## OLD CAPE COLONY

afternoon, you may hear the hoarse bark of some adventurous baboon ; great oak trees throw their blue shadows on the flat sunlit walls, planted by the Governor whose history had so strange an ending.

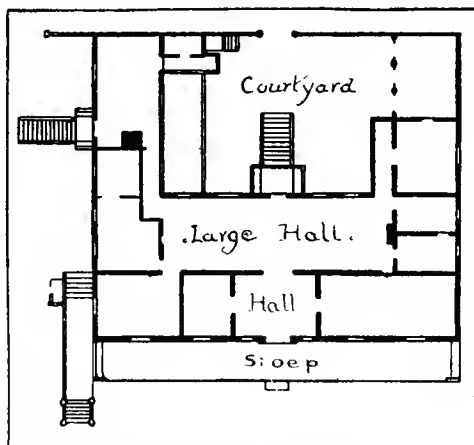
Constantia wine had once a world-wide fame. Under the Dutch Company I believe the wine could not be bought in Europe, as they reserved to themselves the exclusive sale ; but the old farm account books show great export to England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the Cape it cost two Spanish dollars or eleven shillings and sixpence a bottle, and was not given lightly to every guest, says a traveller, but to a rich visitor from whom benefits were expected. You may remember that the broken-hearted Marianne Dashwood of Miss Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* was comforted by a "glass of the finest Constantia wine that ever was tasted." March of time has transformed the place into a Government wine farm, worked by convict labour, and the men pick purple and golden bunches, and call to each other in the silence of the great heat, much as would have done the slaves of the Commander. Perhaps it was named Constantia as a protest of constancy to the wife he was never to see again, though he yearly sent her money. Or this, too, may have been a mark of affection for the van Rheedes, as it seems to have been a name in their family :



## SIMON VAN DER STEL

a little Constantia van Rheede of six months old was buried at Colombo in 1696; her memorial tablet is in Wolfendahl Church.

That invaluable book, *The Child's Guide*, written "by a Lady," of which the thirty-fifth edition was published in 1835, says: "Constantia is a rich sweet wine, made some eight



PLAN OF GROOT CONSTANTIA.

miles from Cape Town; some peculiarity of the soil causes the excellency of the grapes, and the wine is made with great care." There is a second farm, old, but not with the historic associations of Groot Constantia, which seems to have been most often visited by eighteenth century travellers. It is called Klein Constantia, and used to be divided from the domain of the

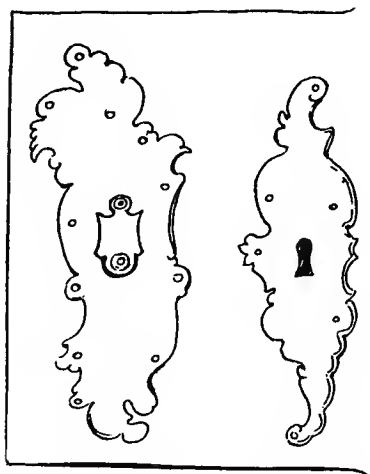
## OLD CAPE COLONY

older place by myrtle hedges. It is of this second farm that the naturalist Sparrmann writes in 1772, when it belonged to Mynheer van der Spoi, and he speaks vaguely of the building, which he calls "old or red Constantia." All the old houses are made of little red bricks, plastered and whitewashed, the ornamentation in strong lime plaster; but I have sometimes wondered if Groot Constantia, being built early and almost certainly of good bricks from the Netherlands, was originally left unplastered, save for the ornamentation.

The place is so associated with its mellow whiteness that it is difficult to visualize it in colour. Thatched, like all those which followed it, with reeds, cut short, of a deep velvety appearance, the roofing has a texture quite impossible to reproduce in any drawing, and which vanishes to nothing in a photograph. About the cutting and preserving of these reeds Governor Simon made severe regulations. The plan differs from and is rather more complicated than the plan of the usual Cape house, for which no doubt it stood as a model. There is even a short staircase, and two or three rooms built on an upper story to the right as you face it—a very unusual thing, as the houses are universally one-storied. The tall window in the gable is never the window of a room in the Colonial house, but lights the great storage loft which runs be-

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

neath the rafters. These lofts are floored usually with brick and a layer of clay, called brandsolder, and intended to give a non-inflammable surface for the burning thatch to fall on should there be a fire, as too often happens. Like nearly all the oldest houses, the woodwork of

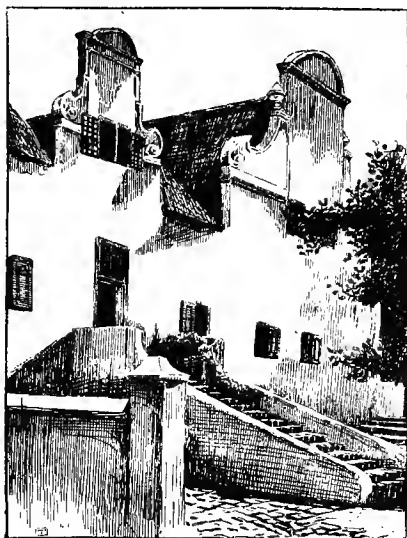


ESCUTCHEONS: GROOT CONSTANTIA AND HOTTENTOTS HOLLAND.

Constantia—shutters, doors, floorings, are solid teak, but the hall is paved with old square flags, and one room with Dutch glazed tiles. Latches, bolts and hinges are finely designed, probably by the skilled workmen going out *viâ* Table Bay to the Indies and other settlements. We hear in 1690 of a coppersmith, carpenters and masons

## OLD CAPE COLONY

being sent from Good Hope to Mauritius, together with other workmen, tailors and the like ; also a silversmith is mentioned, and the Company would not have been at the expense to send out indifferent labour. The shape of



SIDE GABLES, GROOT CONSTANTIA.

the gable is, with some modifications, the gable of the old houses of Holland. I think they almost certainly belonged to the original house, though it has been suggested that the statue of Plenty in the façade was placed there later. To the right as you approach the house are

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

stables and small outbuildings, built in the Batavian fashion, outside the main structure, for visitors and servants. In one of these, van der Stel's elder son is said to have lived, and



WINE HOUSE AT GROOT CONSTANTIA.

it still goes by the name of the Jonkers house. Architecturally the little gables here are interesting, showing as they do the transition of the Dutch gable into the gable of the Cape.

Facing the courtyard behind Constantia

## OLD CAPE COLONY

homestead is the old wine house. The thatch was removed and a fine stucco pediment placed there in 1779, when the place belonged to a Cloete. The pediment holds a medallion of Ganymede on his swan, surrounded by children pelting a curious species of tiger with bunches of grapes. It is modelled in some sort of hard plaster in very high relief, with a good deal of charm, by a French architect who did other work in Cape Town. The "cellar," as these wine houses invariably are called, the two great brick and plaster seats, the flickering shadows, blue as only South African shadows can be, the faint smell of the wine-making, the great quiet of the place, all combine in a curious fascination which I think even the most unimaginative people have felt at Groot Constantia. Behind the wine-house the ground falls suddenly away towards the stream which is dammed up at the bottom of the ravine. Down this slope some old artist designer, Simon van der Stel or a successor, has run a magnificent flight of steps leading from the cellar door to the bottom of the valley.

Strangely enough, none of the early writers give any description of the architecture of the place. Sparrmann, the naturalist, mentions the little weevils (*colandra*) which are still so troublesome amongst the vines, and were caught, a few years ago, and may be still, by curious little

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

nests of leaves placed at the foot of each vine. Captain Hop, in his *Historical Journal* of the Cape in 1778, frankly says of the two Constantias that one was built by Governor van der Stel, and that the other was more modern and in the



WINE-HOUSE STEPS, GROOT CONSTANTIA.

taste of the habitations of the day. So it is possible that the old Constantia had at that time fallen into bad repair. In his day the Company only drew a third of the wine produced on the farms, at a special price, and the rest was sold to ordinary merchants. A great

## OLD CAPE COLONY

deal of his information, however, is taken from de la Caille's observations in 1751, and de Bougainville's narrative of 1769.

A truly British and unconsciously entertaining account is given by Captain Percival, an English officer at the Cape during the second English occupation (1806). The then owner he calls Mr. Pluter, evidently meaning Cloete. "I was so unfortunate as not to find the gentleman in a good humour," says Percival, "and I could scarcely get a good bottle of wine. . . . On my requesting to see the place, he himself came out and informed me that the gentleman was not at home." Percival and his friends then got some of the slaves, for a present, to procure them wine, and to show them the plantations and cellars. "Nor did we take any notice of the owner's surliness and boorish manners when we afterwards met him, but went on to satisfy our curiosity, and obtain the wine and information we wanted." He thoughtfully adds that "some allowance must be made for Mijn Heer Pluter's moroseness, as it is impossible for him at all times to attend to the reception of his visitors, some of whom by their teasing and forward loquacity, might render themselves extremely troublesome and disagreeable to his grave and solemn habits." He tells us very little that is new, though, like Sparrmann, he praises the care taken in growing and cleaning the grapes



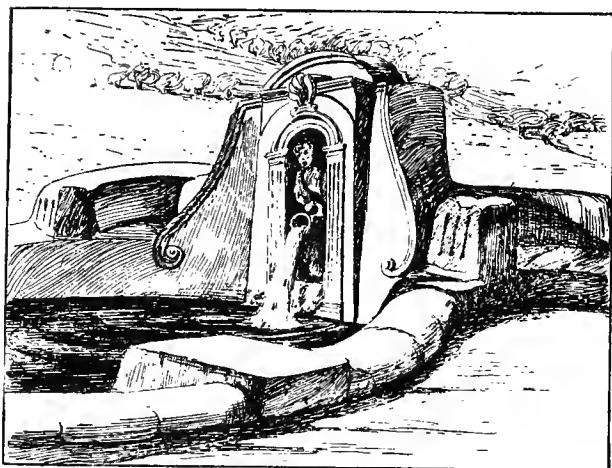




HENDRIK ADRIAAN VAN RHEEDE TOT DRAKENSTEIN  
LORD OF MYDRECHT.

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

and making the wine ; but one is glad to have a description of the leaguers or butts in which the wine was kept, all in his day elegantly carved, the bung-holes covered with brass plates,



OLD BATH, GROOT CONSTANTIA.

hasped down and locked, so that none of the slaves might embezzle the wine.

Relics of the old time are scanty, but there is a broken sun-dial with the half-effaced name of Cloete, and the cannon-balls piled on the gateposts of the lower vineyard are said to have been collected on the plain of Muizenberg after the half-hearted battle with the English in 1795. The circular basin of water with a deep curved

## OLD CAPE COLONY

rim, which goes by the name of the "bath," is well worth seeing, though you must walk a quarter of a mile up the garden between high oak hedges. Whether the fascination of the place lies in these comparatively simple things made by man or in the wonderful beauty of surrounding nature, who shall say? The sun-scorched hillside behind with its scent of hot earth, the great orchards of peach and apricot, the vineyards and vine trails with their background of distant sea and mountain, the clear blue sky and hush of the hot noontide, and the sough of the wind in the branches of a moonlit night—all these go to create it. I cannot tell you to which century belongs the teak Triton, through whose horn the mountain stream splashes on to the old swimming-bath. But I know that, despite all modern changes, you will, if you dream there long enough, see wandering amongst the flickering shadows the shade of Governor Simon van der Stel.

We are fortunate in having a very realistic contemporary account of the Cape in the year 1685. An embassy, going from Louis XIV. of France to Siam, put in at Table Bay. Its objects were said to be religious, and it is true that the great monarch had given his sanction equally to the propagation of Christianity and of trade. I find that at the first meeting of the French East India Company in 1664, "at the house of M. Faveroles,

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

merchant, at Paris," the projectors were given formal permission by the King to settle ecclesiastics in various places, while the company was to "go on boldly under the banner of the invincible Louis."

The ambassador and his missionaries were most hospitably treated by Governor Simon. They wrote enthusiastically of the extraordinary merit of M. van der Stellen. Father Tachard gives a charming description of their reception in one of the large rooms at the Castle, "opening out of the large hall where a sermon is preached on Sundays." Those who know the Castle of Cape Town will have no difficulty in locating it. He tells us, too, that the Governor gave them tea "in the Indian fashion," and that the officials took the air of an evening on the flat roof of the building, a "beautiful terrace paved with large stones and surrounded by balconies and balustrades of iron."

The embassy had arrived at the Cape during the visit of van Rheede tot Drakenstein. They were welcomed by "Monsieur de van der Stel and Monsieur de van der Heyden" (the latter the commissioner of the Company, then in port). They had much polite conversation in Portuguese, and were offered by them the use of the pavilion in the Company's garden for their astronomical observations. Placed as it was in "such a sterile and terrible spot," they con-

## OLD CAPE COLONY

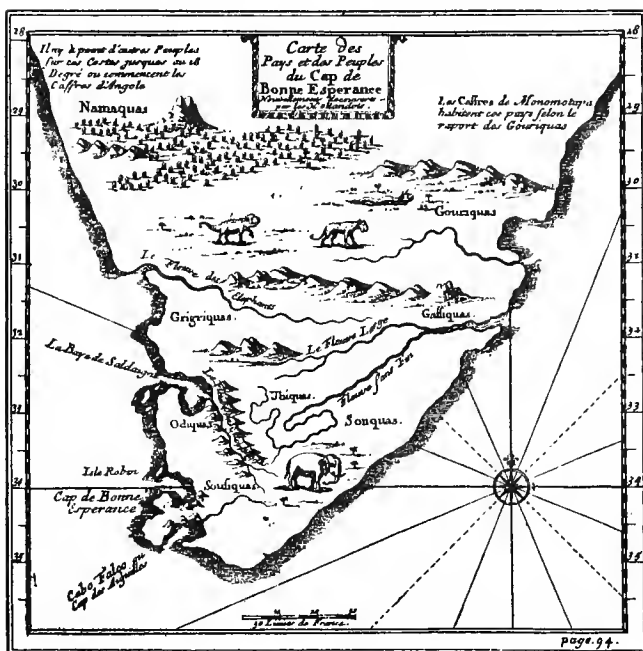
sidered the garden the most curious and beautiful they had ever seen. About the middle of the garden wall beyond the slave lodge was the Governor's house or pavilion, consisting of a hall or vestibule below, with two doors, one opening towards the fort, the other towards the garden, and a reception-room on each side. Here they were lodged for some time and received the best of treatment. Later, when two of their ships, the *Loire* and the *Dromadaire*, carrying several of the missionaries sailing back to France, were wrecked at Cape Agulhas, the survivors were to experience more kindness from van der Stel. No sooner did he hear of their misfortune than he sent an escort of soldiers and horses to bring them to the town. They were taken to the Castle, and received by the commander "at the foot of the steps outside his house," with "every mark of respect and affection." He invited them into a room, made them sit down while tea and wine were brought them, and caused a volley of twelve cannon to be fired in their honour. Tachard and the others, including two Siamese ambassadors, were quartered at a house in the town, and liberally furnished with refreshments. It must be confessed that the bill for these expenses, as well as for the soldiers who mounted guard before their door, was afterwards sent in to the French Government, and the chronicler remarks thereon with some bitterness.

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

After leaving the Cape, and returning again to Siam, Tachard yet again stopped at Table Bay on his homeward journey and received "*les mêmes honêtetez que les voyages précédens.*" "I had assured Monsieur de Vanderstellen," he writes, "that I would return in the following year in good company; on which he made me many offers." The Fathers appeared grateful; but to Simon van der Stel they were false friends. Their time had been employed in collecting information which might be useful to them, and in gaining from the Walloon burghers who came to confess, details about the interior of the colony, and the possibility of Catholic settlements there. From newly-arrived Huguenot settlers, hardly off their ships, they received an impression of disappointment, which they published forthwith in two delightful volumes, illustrated by pictures of the houses, fauna and flora of the countries they had seen. The botanical drawings of the books are excellent, but the authors give rein to their imagination in the matter of houses at the Cape. The chameleon also greatly pleases them; he is depicted in "the grand style," trampling with uplifted paw some highly decorative flowers, and appears also in their map of the "Country and people of the Cape of Good Hope," patrolling the boundary between the land of the Griquias and of the Namaquas. Amongst their pictures a strange horned lizard of large size is given; on

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the map it is seen running into the mountains of the Gouriquas ; and a "little lizard of the Cape," with three crosses on his back—decorative, but unknown to modern naturalists. The year fol-



MAP FROM THE "VOYAGE DE SIAM DES PÈRES JESUITES," 1686.

lowing (1687) a large fleet, under Admiral Vandrecourt and Vice-Admiral du Quesnes, put in at Table Bay with many sick on their way to Siam. Tachard was now in charge of fourteen mathe-



## SIMON VAN DER STEL

maticians for the King of Siam. But the situation had altered.

For long Simon van der Stel had prayed the company at home for colonists and assured them that nothing could be done without more labour. The settlement consisted of a mere handful of people. By the time Constantia was built the slaves numbered 230 men, 44 women and 36 children. A few agriculturists had been sent out from the fatherland, and the burghers numbered altogether 254 men, 88 women, and 231 children ; there were 39 European servants. Intent on his Colony, Simon was eager for more men to cultivate the land, and for more women, to induce them to marry and settle. He had promised freeholds to any of the Company's servants who had good characters and were willing to farm. But they were a lawless, roving set, and comparatively few of the discharged soldiers and sailors cared to settle as tillers of the soil. In 1685 the Orphan Chambers of Amsterdam, in response to requests made by the Company, consented to send out 48 girls ; but at the last moment only three would embark.

For the next few years small groups of seven and eight occasionally appeared. In consequence of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV., there was at this time a large though forbidden emigration of French Protestants into the Netherlands. Often they barely escaped with

## OLD CAPE COLONY

their lives, and crossed the frontier destitute. A certain number of Piedmontese had also found their way to the United Provinces. Out of these refugees the East India Company determined to choose a number of colonists, who were offered grants of land if they would settle at the Cape. It was not easy to persuade a landsman in those days to undertake the horrors of the long voyage, but about 176 settlers were sent out in detachments. Mr. Leibbrandt, keeper of the Cape archives, says that contemporary writers mention eighty more families brought there by Du Quesnes, but that the archives do not allude to them. The newcomers were all of the congregations called "under the cross," or suffering persecution; the European population of the Cape had up to that time been Lutheran and Roman Catholic.

Had the French missionaries in their published volumes been content with descriptions of the animals and the topography of Table Bay all would have been well. But they had asserted that amongst the people of the "religion pretendue," who had arrived as colonists, there was not one who was not filled with disappointment at the far-off land to which he had been brought; and that many of the emigrants would willingly have made reparation for their mistaken ideas and returned to France had not every means of doing so been closed to them. Simon had been perturbed to discover that every detail about the

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

colony and his inland expeditions was known. He had already sent away a French gardener, who was found with a suspicious letter in his possession ; and an apothecary discharged who had given information to Père Tachard. In view of the continually hostile attitude of Louis XIV., the Dutch Company were naturally jealous of their own footing at Table Bay ; and Simon was not unaware of the danger of such a large fleet as that of Admiral Vandrecourt. He wrote afterwards that he had secured the powder magazines, and determined should the least act of hostility occur, to set fire to the settlement and leave the French nothing : a plucky resolution for a man who had taken so much pains to extend and improve the colony. But he received the visitors with his usual courteousness, and on leaving they presented him with a medallion or miniature of the " grand Monarque," and a gold chain with quadruple links. Rather artificial were these friendly relations. The ship *La Maligne*, which on the departure of the fleet from the Cape, put back to France to report progress, spread also reports of the insufficient fortifications of Table Bay, and Du Quesnes when he arrived in Batavia gained a stiff reception. The Governor-General told him that if the Jesuits were seen he could not answer for the conduct of the populace, so irritated were they at the last news from France brought by the Dutch fleet. Governor van der Stel did not come off scot free.

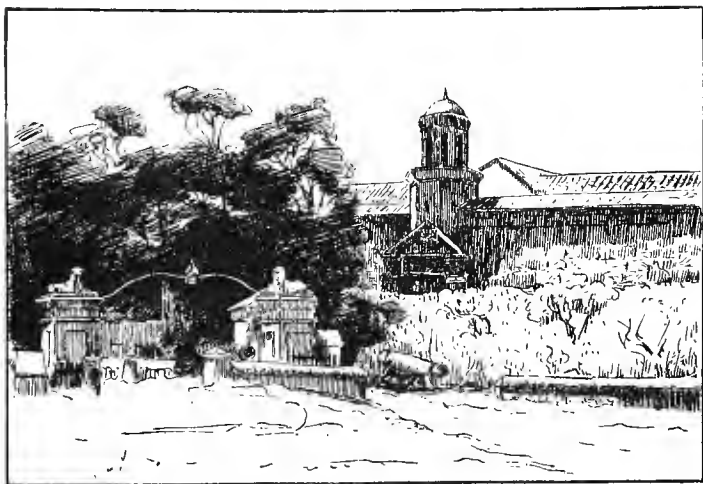
## OLD CAPE COLONY

Both the authorities at home and in Batavia were indignant at his want of caution. Had he not accepted a medallion and chain? Had not the Siamese Ambassador given him a jewelled kris? Had he not allowed his visitors to see the defenceless state of the Castle and the weakness of the garrison? Strangers who had been permitted to wander about at will had on their return to France declared that they could easily have taken the Castle sword in hand, and that if the Dutch Company thought so little of their settlement, and afforded it so little protection, it could be attacked and taken on the very first outbreak of hostility between France and the Netherlands. Two years more and the storm had burst. In 1689 war was declared by Holland and England, who had elected the Stadholder, William of Orange, as her King, against France, and van der Stel was ordered to treat the Frenchmen everywhere as enemies and cause them all the injury possible. There is little ambiguity about these old despatches.

Meanwhile the Huguenot emigrants were being granted their new freeholds of lands along the Drakenstein valley. Whatever disaffection may have been induced by the long sea journey and the experiences of first arrival, the Dutch authorities at any rate did not consider there was much to fear from impoverished refugees. Many of the emigrés had been living in the Netherlands

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

for some time, and could hardly be suspected of anti-Dutch sympathies. Others, who were thought particularly valuable settlers, as they understood wine and brandy making and the cultivation of the olive, were mere peasants, and had every inducement for making a home in the new colony,



GATEWAY OF THE CASTLE, CAPE TOWN.

where each arrival was given, or offered, a gift of money, and each family allotted a grant of land. They had brought out their own minister, a refugee from Zierickzee, says Theal, at a salary of £7 19s. 9d. per month. In 1687 the *Voor-schouten* had sailed from Delftshaven, bringing twenty-two French settlers. The next year the

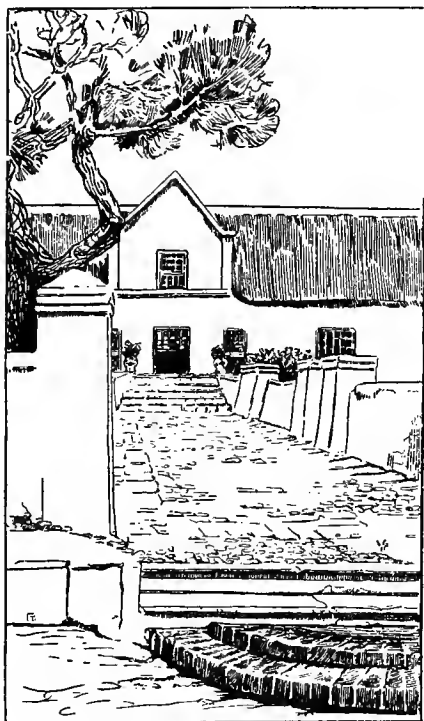
## OLD CAPE COLONY

*Oosterland* left Middelburg with twenty-four emigrants and the *China* of Rotterdam with thirty-four ; twelve of whom, poor people, were saved any more privations and disappointments by dying on the way out. Another ship, the *Borssenburg*, also sailed with French refugees, and the *Suid Beveland* brought a number of French from Middelburg ; but the passenger list is lost, and the only names known are those of Pierre Simond, minister of Dauphiné, and his wife Anne de Beront. In the *China* came also eight young women from the Orphan Chamber of Rotterdam, who were said to be "industrious, of unblemished reputation, and skilled in farm work."

The new comers, thought the Company's Directors, would be an important addition to the 350 burghers capable of bearing arms against the threatened French invasion. Van der Stel, therefore, issued an order to Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, for the burghers to "collect without delay men and houses, fully armed and equipped, and provided with powder and lead, and to leave only ten or twelve men to protect the wives and children against Hottentots or other danger." The signal for starting was a gun fired from the Castle, for which the men were to "listen attentively ;" and on hearing it to move simultaneously from Stellenbosch, Drakenstein, Hottentots Holland, the Cuylen and Rondebosch. Occasionally Governor Simon's orders are so

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

purely perfunctory as to appear issued to appease the Seventeen at home rather than for any practical use at Table Bay. Difficult, indeed almost impos-



PLATTE KLOOF IN THE TYGERBERG.

sible, it would have been to hear this gun signal at Drakenstein and Hottentots Holland; the authorities probably were satisfied of this later,

## OLD CAPE COLONY

for at the top of the Tygerberg behind Platte Kloof farm, granted by Simon van der Stel to van der Hiet, but afterwards a Company's station, used to be an old cannon for giving to the farmers inland warnings which had been signalled from the Castle.

After all, the invasion never took place, Louis XIV. having other things to do at home and abroad. But van der Stel put in force his orders to treat the Frenchmen as enemies, on the return of the second expedition to Siam in 1689. The ensign, Le Chevalier de la Machefolière, came ashore in a cutter, foolishly sure of a favourable reception, and bringing the "compliments" of his captain. He was immediately disarmed, with what surprise and anger on his part we may imagine, and placed with his crew under arrest at the Castle. The boat was then sent back with the French flag flying, but manned with Company's officers and Dutch sailors. Other boats, manned and armed, from the East Indiamen lying in the Bay, the *Nederland* and the *Saamslag*, were to remain near. M. de Courcelles, Captain of the French ship *La Normande*, seeing the cutter returning with a French flag, ordered a salute of nine guns to the Castle; which politeness cost him dear. For under cover of the smoke, the *Normande* was boarded by the cutter and the boat of the *Saamslag*. "They at once fell to," says Simon's despatch, "and after eight of their



## SIMON VAN DER STEL

men and two of ours had been wounded, they cried for quarter, which was granted." The ship was immediately looted by the Company's men, the prisoners and the officers stripped to the skin. Diamonds, jewels, and everything but the merchandise in the hold, requisitioned by the Company, was taken by the captains and sailors of the victorious party. A fortnight later, *La Coche*, the third ship of the Siam expedition, "coming in opportunely," says the despatch, "for refreshments," was also taken and plundered like the first. The *Normande* was afterwards sent back to Amsterdam, where it was rechristened *De Goede Hoop*, and became a ship of the Dutch fleet.

To Governor van der Stel, whose ideal had been a Dutch settlement, the emigrants were disappointing. He was out of conceit with the French; those particular men were difficult to deal with, and the conditions on which they had accepted their lands were a matter of endless complaint. They were not to retain their own language; they were to be spread about amongst the burghers, so that a French colony should be impossible. Van der Stel was bound to enforce the regulations of the Seventeen Directors; in addition, he suspected the new colonists of wishing to form a party with Vice-Admiral Du Quesnes at their head. When a deputation, consisting of the minister Simond, Jacques de Savoye, Abraham de Villiers, and two others, bearded the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Governor at the Castle, in 1689, and asked permission for their countrymen to have a church of their own, he flew into a passion and accused them of ingratitude and impertinence. "It is evident," he wrote, "that they not only want their own church, but their own magistrate and their own prince." They pretended to have left France, said Simon bitterly, because of their religious convictions, but in reality they wanted opportunities of leading a lazy and indolent life; were people of the wrong stamp, he declared, entirely unacquainted with and unfit for the hard life which was the lot of the farmer. He wished that for the future no "cadets or persons of quality might be sent," but industrious and well-behaved agriculturists and tradesmen, preferably of Dutch or German origin. "The crotchetty (*wispelturige*) nature of the French still adheres to them," he writes another time in a burst of irritation, "and they resemble the Children of Israel, who when fed by God's hand in the wilderness still longed for onions."

All these responsibilities increased the burden of government, and the despatches of the Seventeen and from the station of the Indies, abound in fault-finding. The Company had recognized his services, for they had raised his title of Commander to that of Governor. But they were not pleased by the reports of the handsome houses springing up at the Cape, nor did

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

van der Stel's ambition to found a colony where they had only wanted a kitchen garden really find favour with his employers. The Batavian government had more personal grievances. Van der Stel was apt to detain skilled locksmiths and artizans going out to the Queen of the East for the houses of her merchant princes, and to set them *en route* to work instead at the Cape. Owing



VERY OLD FARM BUILDINGS, KOORNHOOP.

to the representations of Governor Simon, Batavia was under orders to receive the indifferent Cape wheat, and corn growing, for some time temporarily neglected at Table Bay, had again been taken in hand. New grain stores were built, say the despatches, "on the side of the cross wall which runs through the Fort," and Simon had invented some air-tight vaults in which corn could be kept for a considerable time. He was accused by his superiors in the East of protecting the Cape to

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the prejudice both of the ships and of the Indies. "Whether it will be convenient for the company," says an indignant letter from Batavia, "to bear in the interest of the Cape agriculturists any more such losses, the Directors will be able to tell you. We, at least, do not think so, nor find any fairness in it, to let the people here, only for the sake of benefiting the Cape farmers, eat so much dearer and worse bread than they can obtain cheaper and better elsewhere." And they asserted that the vegetables supplied to passing fleets were musty and black, and the meat so old that no teeth could bit it through.

Simon's despatches are intensely interesting, full of vitality and a kind of magnificence, but they abound in expostulation which cannot have pleased the Company. "The Fort is in a good state of defence," wrote he in 1697, "so that we need fear no enemy." The corn vaults, he adds, have been finished without expense to the Company. The hospital was in process of building. Eight hundred beds had been provided, stuffed with grass, and a large number of blankets. Fault had been found with the Governor for not sending a certain advance ship to Batavia. The skippers had protested, he says, writing to Amsterdam, that they could not leave sooner as the men were all so helplessly sick there was not enough to man a vessel. The Governor submitted that certain misunderstandings which caused the home-

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

bound fleet to return without calling at the Cape, were the fault of the East India Government. "Viewed impartially, the Governor cannot conceive that any blame can be attached to him, or that his conduct can be suspected by you."

Writing to the Seventeen at Middelburg, he says that the deserters to Holland in 1694 sent back by the Directors, have been released by him and restored to their old position, in consideration of the long voyage, and of their having been in irons for a whole year. Another time, in answer to a letter of complaint about the victualling of the ships, he observes through the medium of the Council, "We cannot refrain from mentioning that the ships are not supplied badly and sparingly, but well and abundantly, to the full satisfaction of the commanding officers . . . whilst during the last fifteen years the Governor has supplied 206,000 more cattle than his predecessors did during the same period." Some of the contentions are highly amusing. "We cannot always refuse altogether to the English," he says in 1698, "what they require after a long voyage, or damages sustained at sea, because of the close alliance between their kingdom and our state. They are generally most pressing, and threaten to complain as soon as they arrive in England should we refuse. . . . (To) the English ship *Mary*, we sold two sails, as we stated, which were more than half damaged by the rats, and you mention it

## OLD CAPE COLONY

with disapproval in your letter ; but if we had not done so she could not have left the place, as she was almost destitute of sails. It was the same with the English ship *King William*, which has almost had a "lost" voyage, and whose officers were so destitute of money that they could not have paid their expenses if we had not lent them 308 florins. . . . They professed that if we did not do it they would be obliged to remain here under protest, not believing our reiterated excuses that we were almost destitute of money ourselves. . . ."

The coast stood in continual fear of pirates. There was the vessel whose commander's name was Kit, carrying thirty-two guns and two hundred men, lying not far off, and a vessel called the *Loyal Russell* then in port, suspected of being hand-and-glove with the pirate. There was the yacht *Amy* held to be of the same character. Her van der Stel apparently seized, and spent much time in explaining his reasons for doing so—that the passes and commissions of the men were forgeries ; that their answers before the court of justice were confused and contradictory ; that "after the sloop had been already twenty-four hours in our possession twelve men were discovered hidden away among the sails and vats and casks, so that if they were innocent of piracy, and honest seamen, they would have had no need to hide themselves. . . . To end the matter,



## OLD CAPE COLONY

therefore," continues the Governor, "we hope that you will now see it in a clearer light, and with a more equitable and favourable eye, and we cannot imagine otherwise than that you will be pleased in every way to understand that we acted in this matter properly."

In 1697 it is noted that ten French refugees had sailed on the *Vosmaer*, but that five had died on the voyage. The other five were sent to Drakenstein, "where they have settled," says the despatch, "and according to report we do not see that they will to-day or to-morrow become an encumbrance to the Company. At Robben Island (where, by-the-by, rabbits are mentioned even at that date) a sergeant who had been superintendent had apparently sold sheep in some prohibited way to the "ship's friends," without the knowledge of the Governor; some accusations with regard to the food of the ships and the hospital had also been made. This, the Governor submitted, did "taste more of an injury to himself than of truth, as he is quite sure that it can never be proved by any one in the world." Of the first accusation the Governor and Council submitted that "under such a charge, so peremptorily and loosely made . . . an honest mind feels oppressed, and people of good service and reputation are suspected before the world; but we trust that you will take no notice of the matter." With all the



## SIMON VAN DER STEL

sordid details, want of knowledge brings from time to time a touch of romance. We hear of "nine strange animals" which the French or Walloons have obtained from the Hottentots in the mountains. Danger from pirates, from war, from condemned and escaped Company's men, from scourges of blight, locusts, cattle sickness and consequent lack of food, and the recurrent shipwreck disasters of the Bay, effectually prevented life from being humdrum or indolent.

Some one has cleverly said, "Your keen intellects, like razors, are considered too sharp for common service." Reflecting on the amount of work accomplished by the elder van der Stel, it seems to have been on those grounds he received so many reprimands. He had founded Stellenbosch, colonized Drakenstein, Frenchhoek and beyond. He had won the confidence of the natives, who consulted him in their difficulties. To their "captains" he gave sticks with brass plates, engraved with the arms of the Company, and he conciliated them in every way with a view to increased barter. "You are to let them have five or six pounds weight of tobacco," he writes from Constantia to the Chief Merchant, in order to keep the taste of that herb among them." Ever mindful of the ships, he had begun a canal or cutting, through the sand at Salt River as a refuge from the heavy winds; but in consequence of the silting of the sand the excavations

## OLD CAPE COLONY

had to be abandoned. A burgher guard now patrolled the town at night, receiving each afternoon a new countersign from the Governor. Simon had made an expedition to Namaqualand to investigate the copper which had been brought for barter from time to time by the natives. Would any other Company's commander of the day have made such a stately journey ; in a coach followed by forty wagons, three hundred sheep, and one hundred and fifty oxen ; whilst he carried with him two trumpets, several hautboys, and five or six violins "in order to charm the aborigines"? It is worth noticing that the Governor recommended the separation of the scabby sheep from the rest of the flocks : so far back do we find the germs of the modern Cape Colony wrangles over cheap food and Scab Acts.

Thousands of oak trees had been planted all over the Colony, and thousands more were standing ready for removal at Rustenberg. A special order had been made to induce the burgher councillors to undertake some planting themselves ; and a piece of land had been given them for this purpose behind the Wijnberg, called the Wolven-gat. Constantia was built, homesteads were dotted over the veld. Weary of his work, in 1696 Simon van der Stel asked leave to retire. The request was coldly received by the Company. "Although we have found and resolved to relieve you of the office and rank you have hitherto held,"

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

runs the despatch, . . . "you are nevertheless . . . to continue in the appointment until you shall have been replaced by some other person."

During the last few years of Simon's Governorship several new characters came upon the stage, ready for the end of the drama, almost, one might say, of the tragedy. Captain Olof Bergh arrived in 1690, a Company's soldier with thirty-five men to strengthen the garrison. The Rev. Peter Kalden, intimately connected with the coming difficulties, was sworn in as minister in the same year, when minister van Loon went for a time to Batavia. The new Secunde Samuel Elsevier, who fell with the fall of the Governor's family, arrived in 1697. Finally, not without honour to his father, Willem Adriaan, Simon van der Stel's eldest son, was appointed by the Company to the now vacant Governorship of the Cape of Good Hope.

"With great pleasure," runs the despatch of June, 1698, "the Governor saw . . . that you were pleased to appoint as his successor his son Willem Adriaan van der Stel, ex-magistrate of Amsterdam, and to promote him to the rank of Councillor-General of India. For this favour he most dutifully and cordially thanks you. On his arrival everything will be transferred to him, and the Governor will give him the necessary information in the interests of the Company, to whose favour he continues to recommend himself."

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Simon was now free to retire to Constantia. His individuality was too deeply woven with the life of the Colony for his name at once to drop out of its records, and to his death it appears again and again. But, curiously, few personal traces of the van der Stels have come down to us. I hear on good authority that a suit of armour belonging to Governor Simon was once in the Cape Town Museum, but it seems to have disappeared. One bitter anecdote of the man comes to us from the inimical and inaccurate pen of Peter Kolbe. "He took an infinite pleasure in imposing all the fictions and sotteries he could upon every one. Having the honour, forsooth, to be once" (and perhaps in that "*once*" is the secret of the bitterness) "in his company at his seat of Constantia, he took it into his head to assure me very gravely, that in a journey from the Cape towards Monotapia, he reached at the distance of 200 miles a very high mountain; where passing the night he ascended to the top, and discovered from thence very plainly that the moon was not so far from the earth as the astronomers asserted, 'for as that planet,' he said, 'passed over my head, the night being very still and clear, I could plainly perceive the grass to wave to and fro, and the noise of its motion in my ears. You set up for an astronomer and philosopher,' said he, 'What think you of this matter?' 'Think, sir,' I replied, seeing him very grave and knowing

## SIMON VAN DER STEL

his temper, ' I think that your Excellency's eyes and ears are as good as most people's, and that it would be very ill manners for me to dispute the evidence.' "



THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL





### III

## The Younger van der Stel

**A**BOUT noon on January 23, 1699, two shots were fired from the Lion's Head, and at sunset the vessels *Stad Ceulen* and *Drie Kroonen* swept on to the Bay. They were, said the Company's journalist, "in a fair state of health and condition." Texel had been left on the 2nd of the previous September, and their lost was only forty sick and sixty dead. On board was Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel and his wife and family.

"Although the south-east wind commenced to blow very heavily during the evening, the governor and his family were conducted from the ship by the Chief Merchant Sieur Samuel Elzevir and the Hon. Fiscal Joan Blesius, and landed at the sand-hills, where he was most civilly received by his father and other members of Council." The military burghers, both foot and horse, had come under orders for the same purpose, and stood in double line. The members of the Council who were present, and some of the burgher officers,

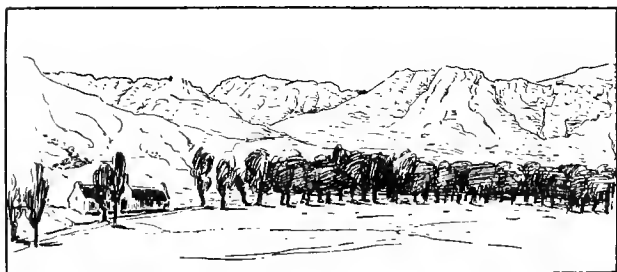
## OLD CAPE COLONY

returned to Government House (i.e. the Castle) where "they were treated to a glass of wine, and once more solemnly welcomed His Honour." Little did they all think that before eight years were passed the young man, broken-hearted and disgraced, would be refused his request to remain on those shores "as a forgotten burgher," and return, shorn of all authority, to the fatherland he had just left with so much hope and ambition.

It was not, as we know, the first time that Willem Adriaan had stood in the shadow of Table Mountain. At Good Hope he had entered the Company's service first as assistant or clerk, then as secretary of the Orphan Chamber. Three years later (1683) he was acting as Secretary of Council, for his signature is on a placaat forbidding grass to be fired or cattle pastured in Table Valley above a certain line, marked out by poles bearing the arms of the Company. But he had been for some years in the fatherland, and when appointed Governor was a magistrate of Amsterdam. His father had arrived at Table Bay Settlement; the son returned to a Colony. White walled farms gleamed with their enclosures on the distant mountains, young oak trees were everywhere planted; vineyards and gardens, vital with the wonderful vitality of virgin soil made the peninsula a paradise in the eyes of the tired seafarers. Beyond the Wynberg on one side, on the other at Hottentots Holland on the far shore

## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

of False Bay, Company's stations were flourishing. Stellenbosch could almost be called a town : it had a Landdrost, and the new minister van Loon had been appointed. There were settlers all along the great and small Drakenstein valleys, to Fransche Hoek and the Paarl Mountain ; and two years earlier Governor Simon had drafted about thirty of the poorer people from Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, on to the Wagon-makers,



WELLINGTON.

Valley beyond Paarl and under the Limietberg ; making the nucleus of what is now the town of Wellington. A wild enough country even now, burnt pale by the hot southern sun, where in the fruit season baboons in long, single-file parties make raids on the orchards outside the town. It has the usual strange fascination of those older places of South Africa, the green, cosy, oak-shaded oases, domestic and European, set in the heart of the dry yellow and pink mountains.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

The day after his arrival Willem Adriaan was busy on the pier, seeing after the young trees which he had brought for the Company's garden. A few days later, the Commissioners having taken stock of all the Company's property, the whole was formally handed over to him as Governor ; the drums were beaten, the military and the burghers appeared under arms, and " the son was solemnly introduced to the people by his father, the ex-Councillor Extraordinary and Governor van der Stel." During the last ten years of Simon's administration the usual inspections from the Governor-Generals of India seem to have been suspended. But a month after the instalment of his son the " Councillor Extraordinary of India and Inspector of Cape Affairs " (they had long titles, these old officials) arrived. The most interesting part of his inspection was the decision to take a journey in search of better anchorage for the ships. Eleven years earlier Simon, going by sea, had discovered and named Simon's Bay. Now the Commissioner, Daniel Heyns, with the new Governor, the Rear-Admiral, two skippers and two Councillors, started off on a land journey in that direction. Steep and high mountains were said to intercept their journey, across which the tracks were so perilous that they had to walk all the way. Their cattle became exhausted, their wagons were only got over the rocks with danger and difficulty ; finally, the boat not being able to reach them on

## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

account of the wind, they were unable to pass the mountain facing them. After a night in a sandy creek where there was not enough fuel to stock a good sized return ship, nor soil rich enough to grow vegetables, they returned home discomfited, saying that the anchorage was foul.

Now that civilization has made rough places smooth, the difficulties of the pioneers are hard to realize. They had been as far as Kalk Bay, to which the children of the Cape now go in half an hour by rail for their holiday afternoons. But it is good to remember our own advantages. The path over the headland to Simon's Bay was only cut with much trouble and expense many years later; and a very short time ago indeed, travellers were glad enough to make use of "Farmer Peck's" old inn at Muizenberg as a place to rest and bait the horses before crossing the dangerous sands of Fish Hoek.

Next year a second inspector arrived at the Cape. The Hon. Wouter Valkenier "ordinary Councillor and Commissioner of the Government, likewise Admiral of the Fleet," was delegated from Batavia to give an exact account of the Cape to their honours in the fatherland. But Valkenier was either a friend of the van der Stels, or indolent; perhaps both. He said it would be more convenient for Willem Adriaan himself to redress grievances, and declined to be presented to the people. Later, his grant of lands to the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

young Governor was called in question, and one is convinced that he aroused the jealous temper of the burghers.

At this time the population of the whole colony numbered 418 men, 222 women, 310 daughters, 295 sons, 60 servants, 702 men slaves, 109 women, and 40 boy and 40 girl slaves. We are told that the wooden pipes which brought fresh water to the ships at the Company's wharf below the Fort had been repaired. It had not been possible to kill the lion who had lurked about the watering place; later we hear that the same lion seized some cattle near the watch-house and at "Roodebloem," the house of a freeman about a quarter of an hour's distance from the Fort.

The year after his arrival (1700) Willem Adriaan made a journey to inspect the outside stations of the Company, and the condition and character of the land of the freemen of the Tyger Berg, Stellenbosch and Drakenstein. Almost due north from the end of the French Hoek valley, there runs for forty-five miles a long range of mountains. The southern extremity is called the Klein Drakenstein mountains, and to the north are the Hawequas; these two ranges are opposite the town of Paarl. Farther north, and separated from the Hawequas by the pass now known as Bain's Kloof, but not yet discovered in these early days, lie the Limietberg mountains. In an almost straight line, are the Elandskloof, the Vogel

## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

Vallei, and the Ubiqua or Obiqua mountains. Some settlers had lately been sent out by the States of Holland, and farms were to be given them. Beyond the Ubiqua mountains he discovered a beautiful valley "about eighteen or twenty hours distant from the Castle." "It has a breadth of four hours on foot," he says, "beyond the Roodezand, which is merely a steep pass going over the aforesaid Ubiqua mountains." As these regions had hitherto had no names for Europeans, the Governor named them the Land of Waveren. The district is now known as the Tulbagh valley, but was for long called Roodezand. Here the new emigrants were granted land, and a few men, unsuccessful in the Drakenstein, were also sent to people it. Thus started the third "colony" of the Cape.

Almost from the first, friction arose between the burghers and Willem Adriaan. He had brought out with him from the Netherlands quantities of young oaks which were put into the plantations behind Rondebosch. Next year twelve thousand were sent from there to Stellenbosch, and eight thousand to Drakenstein. To van Loon, the Stellenbosch minister, was entrusted the superintendence of tree planting, but because the burghers and farmers would not take proper care of the young trees, van der Stel revived the old regulations of forty years earlier, which imposed twelve months' hard labour on any one

## OLD CAPE COLONY

who injured a garden or tree. I do not know if the penalty of the law was enforced, for it was characteristic of the man to prefer threats to punishment. But we find him quaintly sending a picture, drawn by himself, of the "punishment of a tree-injurer" to the Landdrost of Stellenbosch. It was to be placed on a suitable spot in the most frequented roads "to terrify the malefactor." Indeed eighteenth century punishments were not likely to be disregarded; for the same offence in 1740 the punishment was "to serve two years in chains as a convict of the public works, or to be brought to the place of execution and there severely scourged; while twenty ryks dollars were given to the informer, whose name was to be kept secret."

Like his father, not only tree planting, but planning of houses, was dear to the heart of the younger van der Stel. Immediately on his arrival he had set about procuring more slaves, and told the director that since the garrison had been reduced nothing could be effected without slave labour. In June, 1699, he had written to the King of Magellage and Prince of Madagascar to remind him of the "friendship cherished for that king by the Directors of the Company"; and to hope that his officers may be allowed to obtain a large number of slaves. "We trust by the blessing of God," he says, in that curious mixture of piety and callousness which runs



## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

through so many of the eighteenth century references to the business, "that the slave-trade will be more favourable than last year." The first expedition seems to have been rewarded with success. The ship *Peter and Paul* put in to the Bay of Maningare, and after a successful barter with King Simanata carried away 198 slaves. Fourteen of these died, but the others, says the despatch, were well cared for and warmly clothed, and should the majority remain alive it will not be necessary for some years to send for more. "Sublimest King," ran three other duplicate letters to three Kings of Madagascar, "how high the Directors of the Company esteemed the friendship of His Majesty your father, of glorious memory, in their voyages made to your island for slaves, when the officers and merchants were kindly treated, you will remember." They end by persuasively wishing to their "Most Sublime Majesties" prosperity and a long term of health, and are signed, "Your most obedient friend and neighbour the Councillor Extraordinary of the Netherlands East India Company, and Governor of the Cape of Good Hope."

The trade was much interfered with by English pirates, and the ships brought back strange wild tales of these men, who had been rendered desperate by the treachery of their own countrymen. Pardons had been sent out to them for sale, and they had boarded the ships in good faith, for the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

purpose of buying them. Some, after the money had been extorted, were sent back to the island; some had been taken home, and despite the letters of pardon, had been punished by death. "I believe," writes the Governor wistfully, "that a profitable trade might be opened with these people on the island, but . . . it is most unchristian to go hand in hand with robbers."

Enough workmen were probably now secured; certainly building operations were going on rapidly everywhere. Urgent requisitions were sent to the Directors for more building materials: "three hundred more deals for the burghers to save the forests for some time longer, twelve stable and hanging bells, and three hundred fire-locks for the Madagascar slave trade, without which no slaves are obtainable." And again, for "More Norse deals and spar ribs for the citizens, whose houses are rapidly increasing." Some of these hanging bells, ornamented and dated, still ring the dinner hour in the little roofed bell-towers of the farms. In the old days they were used too as bells of warning, and to attract the attention and secure help of neighbours within hearing.

Then, as now, the greatest hindrance to progress in South Africa, next to the want of labour, was the lack of wood and all other appliances. The Governor wrote once that he had not even enough wood to mend the wheelbarrows, and that all building operations had therefore

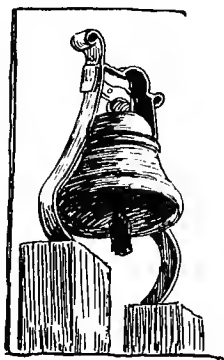
## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

ceased. The difficulty was no doubt increased by the misfortunes of the little colony at Mauritius, soon afterwards abandoned. To the Netherlands Mauritius sent quantities of ebony and teak, cut into blocks in the forests and so shipped, as well as a good deal of ambergris found on the shore. She supplied the Cape with timber and fuel and plank beds for the slaves, the Mauritius Governor receiving orders from the Cape, as did the Cape from the Governor-General of Batavia. From this unfortunate island came tale after tale of disaster ; complaints of English ships, who, notwithstanding that William of Orange was now King of England, left the island showing, say the Mauritius despatches, "the ordinary English impertinence and their thievish nature by refusing to pay." Worse tales of pirates who harassed the Company's men, hurricanes that destroyed their homes and their harvests, and slaves and mutineers who had escaped to the surrounding wilds and plotted to regain their freedom by setting fire to the Company's buildings, and putting an end to the whole Settlement. So that probably from this time the wood supply from here came to an end.

The first serious quarrel of the Governor with the burghers was three years after his arrival, and was on account of the new church. Foundations of a church had been dug in Cape Town thirty-five years before, but they were very bad and

## OLD CAPE COLONY

small. Willem van der Stel caused them to be made of a proper depth and shape, and either designed or had the church designed in the shape of an octagon. For this the Governor, to the indignation of the burghers, appropriated the



FARM BELL, GROOT CONSTANTIA.

charitable funds and legacies of the church council. The burghers contended that the Company was bound to provide church and schools free of expense. The Governor, who probably knew that the money was not otherwise forthcoming, argued that their charity could not be put to a better use. He seems to have been in possession of the local funds, and the church, splendid in its way, was finished in 1704; with what heartburnings, the next few years were to demonstrate. A Coetzée was the first person married in it.

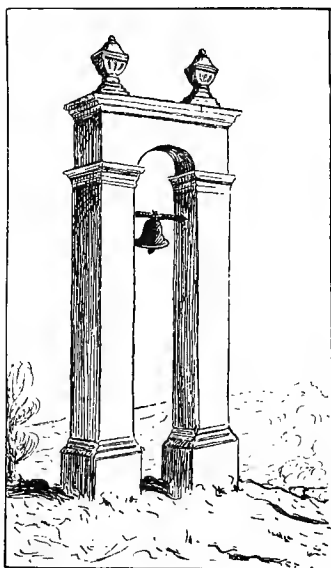
## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

Governor Willem's post was no sinecure ; there was a growing dissatisfaction amongst the burghers. At Drakenstein they had been ordered to supply the Roodezand colonists with wagons, as the Stellenbosch burghers had done for them years before, but they calmly disobeyed the mandate and wrote instead seven pages of palaver. Hay ordered from Klapmuts for Stellenbosch was not supplied, and wool required from the free burghers was not sent to the Cape. For some time there had been disturbances with the Hottentots. It was difficult to ascertain whether or not the Company's regulations were enforced at the outposts. Natives had stolen two hundred head of cattle from Henning Huising, the meat contractor. Then Gerrit Cloete was robbed of some hundred head near the far-off grazing lands of Riebeeck's Kasteel. It was perhaps after this that he gave his farm the melancholy name of *Alles Verloren*. Cloete took a summary and personal vengeance on the raiders of his flocks, and was in consequence brought to the Castle to be tried. Perhaps had Governor Willem been less thorough things might have righted themselves ; but he had an uncomfortable way of probing everything to the bottom.

In 1700 the burglier companies of Stellenbosch mutinied. The yearly parade had in consequence to take place at the Cape under the eye of authority. The three companies of infantry and cavalry,

## OLD CAPE COLONY

fully armed, were to assemble separately. The officers, Captain Barend Burchard, Lieutenant F. du Toit, and Ensign Gerrit Cloete were allowed to retain their appointments. But those who



FARM BELL, MEERLUST, EERSTE RIVIER.

remained absent without lawful cause were to be fined ten ryks dollars and to be punished at the Governor's discretion. They were "seriously advised to carry out these orders promptly." The "parrot shooting," which had taken place yearly ever since the founding of the township,

## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

was to go on as usual. As times went, the rule of Willem Adriaan was far from severe. His conduct to the French settlers was eminently that of a peacemaker, and judging from the signatures of the protest made in his favour a few years afterwards, the Frenchmen almost unanimously wished him well. Of forty-five persons had up for marauding and stealing cattle from the Cabuquas or great Kafirs, more than 120 miles from the Castle, he writes that he will not punish them because of the poor wives and innocent children who would be thrown into great misery "Moreover," he adds, with the usual shrewdness and grasp of ultimate issues of the van der Stel despatches, "it was greatly to be feared that as soon as the Fiscal apprehended any of them, the rest would flee inland in order to escape punishment. In that case, wood and mountain would become entirely unsafe, and the well-disposed inhabitants would never be secure on their farms."

But something unfortunate about the man's character embroiled him both with his superiors and the burghers under his rule. His despatches were full of independent expressions, details of interest "collected," as he says "out of curiosity," and ambitious suggestions which apparently gave little satisfaction. He was charged with having communicated secret messages to others besides the commander of the return fleet, who always

## OLD CAPE COLONY

brought and received certain "secret orders," mainly connected with the flags to be displayed as signals, which were continually changed, the Governor and the Council at home alone knowing the proposed alteration. The Amsterdam Chamber, specially charged with Cape affairs, complained that he wrote meagrely to the Chamber and exhaustively to the Directors—I suppose to individual Directors. The Governor did not deny these charges, but replied in an extraordinarily humble tone, "as what I have done has been overlooked, I will take care punctually to carry out the orders of the Directors, without departing from them in the least."

The first open evidence of personal animosity to the Governor was shown by one Jan Rotterdam. Under the Company's laws, all burghers were bound to stand up in church on the Governor's entry. This Jan Rotterdam refused to do. On being questioned, he alleged physical infirmities. But he was also found to have entered into a "detestable conspiracy against the Governor." He was sent to be judged at Batavia, with the unfortunate result that he was looked on by the other malcontents as a martyr. Soon afterwards various changes had to be made in the civil appointments, "with an eye to the vile and faithless conduct and evil intentions of some burgher officers at the Cape, Stellenbosch, and Drakenstein, but especially at the two last mentioned



## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

Colonies." The country districts now grew more and more disturbed. At last even the shooting contest on the "parrot mountain" near Stellenbosch had to be suspended. This was the finishing touch. One morning in September twenty men from Drakenstein and beyond the Berg River, with the wives of van der Byl and Wessel Pretorios, marched into Stellenbosch beating drums and demanding the restoration of the shooting contest and the annual parade. After some parley with the Landdrost Starrenburgh, a personal friend of the van der Stels, who found not a single officer or corporal amongst them, the mutineers announced that if assured they had done their duty, they were prepared to return home. "The talk of the women," writes Starrenburgh to the Governor, "I pass over in order not to trouble you more than occasion requires. . . . I therefore went to where the drum was beaten hastily, and found a large number of people dancing round it. Having asked the drummer who had ordered him to beat his noisy instrument, he replied that he did not understand Dutch. The whole day," continues the Landdrost with some pride, "I remained in the street to keep my eye on everything, and found that owing to my presence there was peace and quiet. I hope," he adds, "to progress by means of gentleness, but Hon. Sir! the women are as dangerous as the men, and do not keep themselves quiet." Grevenbroek the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Secretary, and Adam Tas and his wife he said instigated and corresponded with the disaffected people. To this communication the Governor replied praising the conduct of the Landdrost, and adding somewhat grimly that the audacious drummer should be "sent to the Castle at Cape Town, where means would be found in French, as he professed not to understand Dutch, to make him acknowledge his presumption, and at whose instigation he had acted."

The excitement roused was not easy to quell. What had merely been the uprising of a handful of country folk quickly developed into an active combination of several of the richest burghers against any one who supported the van der Stel family. For long they had resented the agricultural schemes of the Governor, who likely enough took little pains to make himself understood, and thought too lightly of their opinions to escape the accusation of insolence. Now the smouldering hatred could find expression. The whole story reproduces on a smaller and humbler scale the attitude of the burghers of Holland, a few years earlier, towards the house of Orange. The family was simply too much in the ascendant. Too many of the van der Stels occupied important positions as Company's officers, arriving at the Cape with salutes and ceremonial receptions. The name cropped up continually in the journal. There was Lodewyk van der Stel cashier

## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

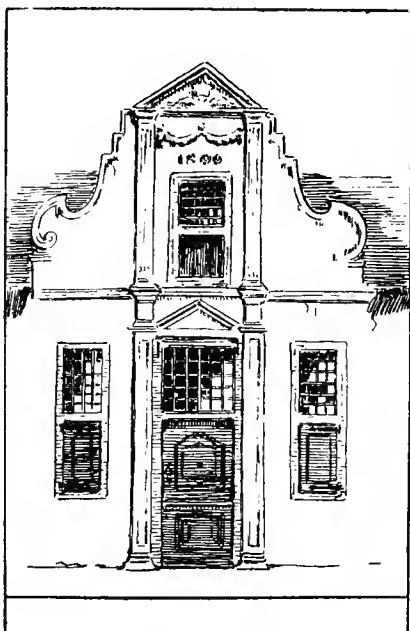
at Table Bay, a third Adriaan is mentioned as Junior Merchant of the return fleet. Adriaan, Governor of Amboina, younger brother of Willem Adriaan, when he visited the Cape with General Harman de Wilde to inspect the fortress, was received as befitted his station, salutes being fired from the Castle and answered from the ships ; and on the birthdays of the old Governor bunting was displayed in the Bay, and the highest officials went out to Constantia to congratulate him. Worse than this, Governor Willem was making efforts to improve the general condition of the Colony by the efforts of the individual. Later he wrote through his Council to the Company at home : " It is clear as the sun that our striving must be that corn, meat, and wine should be obtainable in abundance and cheaply, that the Company's ships may obtain enough supplies. This, however, is once for all against the interests of the farmers, who will not see it with satisfaction. They prefer a lazy and jolly life, and to make much out of small wares . . . if they bred wool sheep, they would more than cover the loss sustained by the fall in the price of meat mentioned above." Such a man was a dangerous and uncomfortable Governor. Without much trouble the burghers prepared papers of indictment, got signatures of people who hitherto had been loyal to van der Stel and his friends, and forwarded them to Holland and Batavia.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

It was a difficult moment for the Council at the Cape. They were unable to take any extreme measure without permission from the Company, and they knew too well that a prompt answer was impossible. Meanwhile discipline had to be maintained, and some show of authority and order. Papers which more than proved his guilt were seized in the desk of Adam Tas and brought to the Castle. After deliberation it was decided to send back the chief malcontents to be judged by the Seventeen Directors in the fatherland. The homebound fleet of 1706 carried with it the five ringleaders : Henning Huising, Jacobus van der Heyden, Ferdinand Appel, Pieter van der Byl, and Jan van Meerlant. Adam Tas had drawn up an "accusation" illustrated by engravings of the unauthorized magnificence of Willem van der Stel, and full of anecdotes of the evil conduct of the family. Briefly, it stated that the Governor, his father, brother, and all his friends had built themselves splendid houses, and there lived in princely style, oppressing the burghers. To build the Governor's mansion of Vergelegen in Hottentots Holland, the best timber and the best workmen had been employed, and the draught oxen of the burghers, requisitioned for carrying the materials, had died of fatigue. Old Governor Simon had unjustly acquired grazing land on the Steenberg beyond Constantia, to the exclusion of all other burghers. Frans van der

## THE YOUNGER VAN DER STEL

Stel at his farm of Parel or Paarl Vallei (Pearl Valley), adjoining Vergelegen, held a monopoly of fishing. His adjacent land was Paarde Vallei, or Horse Valley, probably once a haunt of zebras.



PAREL VALLEI.

We know that the mountain at the Cape lying between Riebeecks Casteel and the Koeberg was named Paardeberg on account of the zebras. Koeberg was named from the hippopotami, which

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the settlers wrongly called zeekoe or seacows. From Paarde Vlei the waters of False Bay are visible, and Frans was said to keep a watch on the shore to enforce his rights, beating and ill-treating all who opposed him.

The Honourable Company were greatly impressed by these indictments. Perhaps the men sent home detected, astutely enough, a certain jealousy in the attitude of the Directors. For the van der Stels the catastrophe was swift and complete. In 1707 a peremptory despatch arrived from the Company. The Directors, it said, had been unable to discover the guilt of the burghers sent home on charge of mutiny. Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel was to be recalled to the fatherland, together with the Secunde Elzevir, the Landdrost Starrenburgh, and the minister Kalden. Frans van der Stel was to have as soon as possible "the districts and limits of the Company described by charter as belonging to her." The Company's servants were for the future to build for use and not for show. The house of Vergelegen was to be destroyed.

THE ACCUSATION OF WILLEM  
ADRIAAN VAN DER STEL





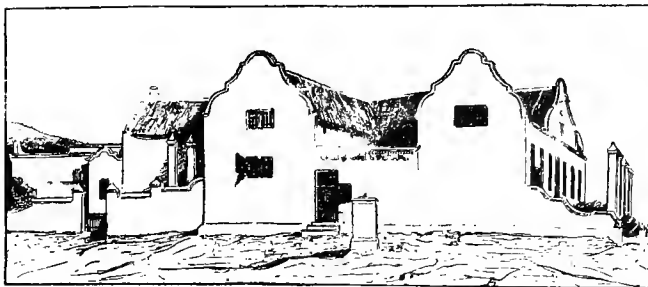
#### IV

### The Accusation of Willem Adriaan van der Stel

**I**T is a strange lesson in human nature to discover that all the burghers who accomplished the recall of Willem Adriaan van der Stel on account of his fine house and magnificent way of living, were men who owed their own grants of land and advancement to one or other of the two Governors, and that with three exceptions they themselves owned the best houses in the Colony. The ringleader, Henning Huising, was the same who many years before had obtained large grazing rights near Eerste River. Once a shepherd from Hamburg, he had been rescued by the van der Stels from extreme poverty, and had married one of their servants. The elder Governor had granted him the monopoly of the meat contract, and in doing so had come under the Company's displeasure. "The house of Huising," pleaded the younger van der Stel, "was in all respects larger, higher and grander than Vergelegen . . . who then would have sup-

## OLD CAPE COLONY

posed that fault would have been found with the house of the Governor." Meerlust is still a stately pile amongst the simpler surrounding farms. A river runs through the oak woods of the valley beyond where the trees have towered to an immense height, though on the stony ground round the homestead they are blighted. Through Eerste River below passes the old "Company's drift,"



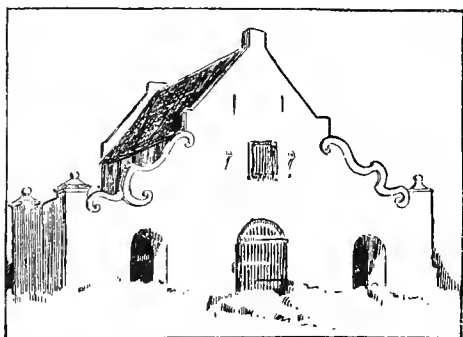
MEERLUST, EERSTE RIVIER.

in which Simon and his wagon once stuck, as he relates in an early despatch dated from Meerlust. However much the house may have been improved in later years, the ground plan, for a seventeenth century colonial farm, indeed, for a farm anywhere, is unusual enough.

Most of the flooring of the house is of teak, and there are teak cupboards to the walls and a teak fire-place with a particularly fine fire back and folding doors, after a fashion found in one other

## THE ACCUSATION

house of the same period. Within, the old pavement of small red bricks has worn out, but there is some handsome large square red tiling. About are a great number of farm buildings, all ornamented with emblems of their use. The forge has implements above it, the carpenter's shop a tool box, another out building has two geese, which, I was told, were an emblem of early rising. The



HEN HOUSE AT MEERLUST.

hen-house is carefully designed and ornamented, so are the wine-house and the sheds ; never was there such an expenditure of plaster curlicues as runs riot over the walls. Apart, on the wind-swept hill, is the little walled graveyard of the farm ; within, amongst the overgrown tombs may be that of Huising himself. But possibly he was buried in the old church at Table Bay, for, as we shall see, he grew to be one of the props of church

## OLD CAPE COLONY

and state ; and his house at Cape Town was mentioned as " particularly handsome, and belonging to the richest burgher in the Colony."

To the end the man pursued Willem Adriaan with incredible hatred. During the brief period of his quasi-disgrace in Holland, his wife, Mrs. Huising, entered into a conspiracy on her own account with the minister of Drakenstein, Le Boucq, who seems to have been something of a lunatic, as well as ill-disposed to the Governor's authority. Having to preach one Sunday at the Cape, he invited his " adherents," says the despatch, to come, saying they would have a " confertiesje " or divertisement. He then, from the pulpit, publicly dismissed the Secretary of Justice and the deacon ; with earnest exhortations to the Christian congregation no longer to acknowledge them as members of the same. He interspersed his discourse with " many hateful expressions," and finally let the congregation sing the last two verses of the 149th Psalm, to the utmost consternation of his audience. The wife of Lieutenant Adriaan van Rhee (who was apparently now sent out to inquire into the business, perhaps as son of an old friend of the van der Stels) fainted from agitation and had to be carried into the house of the sexton.

Le Boucq, having been suspended for this offence until the arrival of the new Governor, now wandered through the country, with a pair of

## THE ACCUSATION

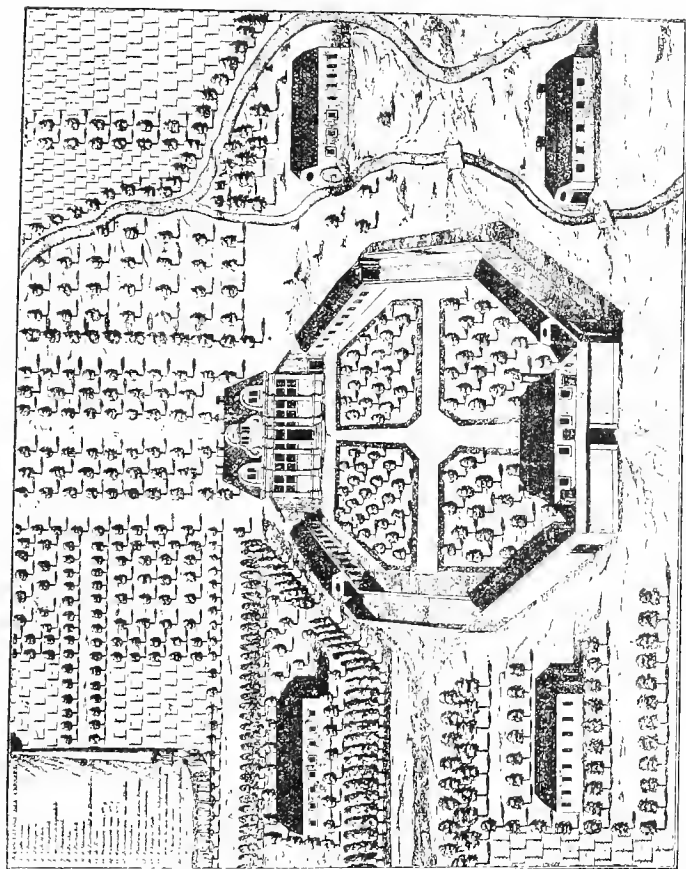
pistols and a good sword at his side, having with him two slaves who carried heavy sticks shod with iron ; in this guise he proceeded to visit the farmers, to secure their protection against the Government. Indeed, he was so far successful that some of the elders and deacons of Stellenbosch suggested that the " Rev., godly, and highly learned Mr. Engelbertus Franciscus Le Boucq might be sent to minister to and comfort them." At this juncture Mrs. Huising was asked to give evidence against Le Boucq ; he was said to have made use of defamatory expressions against Administrator D'Ableing at her house, and in the presence of herself and the widow of the minister van Loon. But Mrs. Huising, even when very " civilly required " by the acting Administrator, refused to confirm any statement whatever ; alleging that her memory was short. She was, therefore, on December 27, 1706, imprisoned at the Castle at her own cost. On January 5, an indignant petition " filled," says the journal, with " very tart, libellous, and hateful expressions towards the Government, and signed by twenty-seven freemen," demanded that Mrs. Lindenhovius or Huising be set at liberty. It was very painful, said the petitioners, with delightful frankness, " to behold such a matron, summoned under such a vile, stinking, and fictitious pretext " by the Court of Justice. Whether because of these " tart " expressions or because at this juncture Mrs.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Huising offered to confirm her statement by oath, she was liberated the same day.

By this time Willem van der Stel was no longer responsible for the legislation. But Huising was none the less furious against him. He summoned the ex-Governor before the Council demanding 44,000 florins and payment for 9,000 sheep ; declared that rather than keep him a day longer in the Colony he would abandon his claim and bring it on again in the fatherland, and, falling into a passion, he swore that the name of van der Stel should be eradicated from the country.

When the first news came of his recall, van der Stel had refused to believe it. He seems to have been only dimly aware of the animosity of the burghers. Their "accusation" does not err on the side of restraint. The Governor, it says, is a scourge of the land, a tyrant and a cause of suicides. He envies the prosperity of the burghers and frequently says that "a poor community is more easily governed." His best friends, it continues, are "coarse knaves who live by roguery and theft," ; also he "lends his ears to insipid people and flatterers, being afraid of the truth." He was accused of employing more than sixty of the Company's servants besides a hundred slaves in his own service, and of absenting himself for long periods at Vergelegen when he should have been at the Cape. He harboured runaway slaves, and his cruelty had made freemen



## OLD CAPE COLONY

take their own lives. He had forbidden the wine trade, kept his forests to himself, and while he and his brother Frans sold their wheat to the Company's bakers at a high price, they paid no tithes themselves. The family not only grasped all they could, but furthered in every way the interest of their personal friends. Several accusations were made against old Governor Simon. Finally, a large drawing had been prepared of the Governor's house called Vergelegen ; whose grounds stretched, said Kolbe (vaguely, but always ready to throw a stone at the family), "in the direction of Natal." The property, declared the rebels, was more like a small town in the extent of its buildings than the house of a private person.

Against Frans van der Stel there seemed to have been even a more inveterate spite. He is as full of evil ways as his brother, said the accusers, as "full of them as an egg is full of milk." It had pleased "this pretended squire Frans to make a beastly coarse and shameless request to a certain burgher, viz., that it would greatly please the squire and his brother and show great friendship to both if he would give a good thrashing to two ex-burgher Councillors (who are men of honour) so that they felt it." We cannot help suspecting Frans of a fatal sense of humour, and he was probably a fantastic person. His little deeds are made out to "Monsieur Francois van der Stel." He sent a flippant reply to the Directors saying



## THE ACCUSATION

that he was ready to go if they would tell him where to go to, but that as he did not know in what direction, or with what ships, or how far the Company's boundaries extended, and as the Council at the Cape could not inform him, he respectfully asked for further orders. It would almost appear that he doubted the seriousness of the recall, for he had a second grant of land, that of Paarde Vallei, made out to him in 1707, after this first command, and just before his final exile.

The elder brother was filled with dismay which he did not try to conceal. His trees were beginning to grow, his agricultural schemes to succeed. The disgrace was hard to bear, and the loss to himself and his family would be heavy both in prestige and in actual money. Moreover, he loved the place. In a most touching despatch he prayed the Directors to allow him to remain longer at Vergelegen if only for a year, "as a forgotten burgher who had striven to release himself from the companionship of his fellow men."

I hold no brief for Governor Willem van der Stel. The pages of his administration have fewer instances of slave cruelty than any of those following, but without doubt a sinister note was struck here and there. One has to remember that torture was used pretty freely by the Dutch in their Colonial settlements, and only a few years earlier was treated everywhere as a legitimate means

## OLD CAPE COLONY

of extracting information ; indeed, a Hollander author of 1624, referring to the tortures at Amboina, states, whether rightly or wrongly I do not know, that the acts of the Governor there were merely the "administration of justice according to the laws of the Netherlands," and argues that their condemnation by England or any other country where torture was not generally used was inadmissible. Under Willem van der Stel at the Cape one instance of torture is mentioned, that of a man accused of murdering a Hottentot, of whom is entered that "though he confessed a little he confessed nothing at all of what was required." One remembers too the audacious drummer who was ordered to go to the Castle where "means were to be found" to make him speak. The Governor was evidently greatly tenacious of forms, and apt to resent any demonstration of respect shown to others than himself. His letters are forcible and in a way artless. Here is one written to Robben Island in 1704—

"We have read your reasons why the day before yesterday you fired five guns at the island when you saw all the flags and pennants flying from the passing yacht *Hamer*, as you believed the Governor to be on board. We therefore do not blame you, but consider what you did proper and well done. But as regards the mate who had such assurance and boldness under our very eyes, we will certainly make him feel our displeasure,

## THE ACCUSATION

and treat him according to his desserts, (so) that neither he nor any one else on board any ship will feel inclined to do anything of the kind again. You may depend on this. We wish you all prosperity."

The letter is signed by Willem van der Stel alone, and is more private than official. Petulant enough and perhaps terrifying for the "mate." Yet, for the life of me, I cannot help believing that there was a good deal of bluster about the suggested punishments; and that the man who so loved his far-away farm amongst the mountains as to be willing to live there, shorn of authority, and "released from the companionship of his fellow men," had something a little better in him instead of a little worse than the majority of the East India Company's officials.

No man can extract sympathy from a company. The Directors replied uncompromisingly that it seemed "strange" that the Governor should wish to be a forgotten burgher, and that he was to obey their former commands and to return as soon as the business of confiscation could be got through. As to Frans, "the protest," they observed, "of the free man or colonist, Frans van der Stel, about the district and the limits of the Company, and that he does not know in what manner he is to depart, appears to us very frivolous; we therefore do not intend to reply to it, only saying we persist in our despatch of October

## OLD CAPE COLONY

30, 1706, that he shall leave the Cape and the Company's land, and as soon as possible proceed beyond the Company's limits."

Starrenburgh had already left Good Hope with the return fleet. Minister Kalden had prayed to have his departure postponed, so as to sell his chattels and goods. Sieur Elzevier had sent in a humble petition, together with those of the van der Stels. It was refused, and both were ordered to embark at the same time as the Governor and his brother.

Nearly a year of suspense and disgrace had been endured by the accused men, and perhaps when the despatch of 1708 arrived they experienced, with all their bitterness of heart, some feelings of relief.

One of the last functions at which the old Governor Simon and his son were to be present together was the military funeral of Nicholas Welters, the Commander of Galle, who had died at sea and was now buried in the church in Cape Town. Starting from the house of the Captain Olof Bergh, the bier was preceded by the military with arms reversed, and pikes dragging, while the coat-of-arms of the dead commander was carried by the lieutenant of the Castle, and a staff, a pair of gloves, and a sword sheathed in a crape-covered scabbard were carried by the ensign. The coffin was borne by sailors and six merchants, and six skippers of the fleet were pall-bearers.

## THE ACCUSATION

We can fancy the stately procession as it wound out of the Castle—a line of pygmies under the great bare wall of the mountain above, across the “Plein,” turning in at the burial ground of the newly finished church. In the rear came the Commissioner, the Governor, the two ex-Governors, the officers of the fleet, and all the chief Cape burghers. How the sick men in the hospital across the canal must have crowded to the windows and into the courtyard in front, to spy what they could, for the entrance to the church was not on the Heerengracht in front of the hospital but on the other side; the side now called “Church Square.”

Innumerable discussions now took place in Council about the disposal of Vergelegen, and in what manner they should secure the largest revenue to the Company. What compensation should be given to the Governor for the wine then incasked, and for corn sown and not yet reaped; whose was the ownership of the wine potentially in the grapes planted by Willem Adriaan? Cheese-paring policy is unpleasantly in evidence, and it is clear that at all events the van der Stels were the best gentlemen of the lot. Perhaps with men whose aims and ambitions were far beyond the limited outlook of the burgher of Table Bay, and the commercial instinct of the director at home, misunderstandings were inevitable. The title deeds of the elder van der Stel were called in

## OLD CAPE COLONY

question and investigated, but only one unimportant bit of grazing land seemed to have a doubtful title deed.

On May 6, 1707, the new *Secunde d'Ableing* arrived. Landing after dark, he was courteously received by the disgraced Governor and taken to the Castle. A few days after he was presented to the people on the balcony of the Castle by Willem Adriaan, and installed as Administrator and acting Governor.

There is just that touch of human interest about the van der Stel story which makes it impossible for any one to remain quite dispassionate. Theal, the Cape historian, has given it against them, and says the Governor merited his exile. On his return to Amsterdam Willem Adriaan published a "defence" in which he refuted nearly all the charges made against him. He gives a drawing of *Vergelegen* very like indeed to the one depicted by the burghers in the "Accusation," but not on the same scale of grandeur, and set amongst lonely mountains. To mark its desolate situation, Hottentots and fierce wild animals are seen in the immediate neighbourhood.

The farm was, he asserted, undertaken with a view to agricultural experiments which would have been all to the benefit of the Colony. He admitted that he had given harbourage to runaway slaves, but only, he said, because they had been cruelly treated. In most cases he gave a

## THE ACCUSATION

complete denial to the charges, and a certain amount of intimidation seems to be the only misdeed proved against him.

Interrogated as to the truth of various threats made by him to burghers whose cattle strayed on his grazing land, he quaintly replied by another



PICTURE OF VERGELEGEN FROM THE "DEFENCE."

question. "Would any one possessing land," he asked, "look with kind eyes when another's cattle came on it and ate up the pasture, leaving his own to die?" He spoke of his pain and disgrace at his recall to the Fatherland, and the destruction of Vergelegen. Of the grievous injury to his reputation done him by those who spoke of him as "a tyrant, a scourge of the land," and other like

## OLD CAPE COLONY

things. Above all, of the injustice of saying that he was the cause of several suicides ; and that he had "by deceit and violence taken away their sheep from some of the people." As to the grandeur of the building, he proved pretty conclusively that his house was not really so fine as that of several of the other burghers, who owned in addition large grants of land. That of the Governor, given by Wouter Valkenier in 1700, was 400 morgen in area. Henning Huising had received from the van der Stels five separate grants, lands covering an area of nearly 600 morgen, and he had encouraged and advised the Governor and the Secunde each to take a piece of land and cultivate it. Moreover, "when the Company's servants had no land for their requirements and domestic purposes, all, including the Governor, were compelled to buy at the dearest rates their necessary corn, cattle, wines, and vegetables, etc., from the freemen, besides having to depend upon their grace whether or not they would be inclined to help the Company's servants with all these necessities, which indeed would be an unbearable burden for a Governor and other high placed officers."

Perhaps the oddest thing in all this miserable business was the denial, when it was too late, of their own charges, and the plea of ignorance made by the very men who were hounding van der Stel from the country. Adam Tas was



## THE ACCUSATION

examined at the Cape by Adriaan van Reede. He denied that he had ever been injured by the Governor. Questioned as to his reasons for asserting that the Governor was a "fellow lost to all honour, an accursed tyrant, a shameless slanderer, a false-hearted rogue," he replied that he was sorry from the bottom of his heart that he wrote it down, and that it was done in a fit of mad passion. Interrogated on all the other points, he could not substantiate one accusation, but stated that he only had them by report or from hearsay. Of the other men questioned on the same subject, several said that they were sorry from the bottom of their heart that they signed the letter of accusation against Willem Adriaan. They appeared quite unaware of the charges conveyed by it, and acknowledged that they had signed in ignorance of what it contained, in the hope that by doing so they would induce the Government to readjust the wine licence and meat contract. He had signed "through his simplemindedness," said one, and "because of Huising, who had always advanced him money." A letter in warm praise of the Governor, who had "done right and justice to all; protected the good, punished the evil, and helped forward and placed on their legs all the people who had by their good conduct deserved it; as much as possible and as far as the interests of the Hon. Company allowed him to do so,"

## OLD CAPE COLONY

was signed by 255 men, many of them well-known burghers, such as Jacob Vogel, Claus Prinsloo, J. ten Damme, the Kotzees, Pieter de Vos, Jacob von As, Jan Roux of Provence, the brothers de Villiers, Pieter Jordaen of Cabris (Cabriere), Gideon Malherbe, Jean Gardiol, and other of the French settlers, besides Louws, van der Merwes, and many names still found at the Cape.

The animosity of the ringleaders persisted to the last. The feeling of irritation, said the Council in a despatch to the Directors, "was incredibly bitter." Jacobus van der Heyden and Adam Tas at one time decided to return by the same fleet as the exiled Governor, in order to represent the cause of those whose wrongs were still unredressed, and the Council confessed they would in no way regret the departure of the delegates, who were "the most passionate amongst them all, who made the greatest commotion, and professed to have suffered the most." After all, the burghers altered their mind at the last moment and did not go. Tas, as I said, adopted even an apologetic attitude; but on the day before Willem's departure, by his desire the papers of Adam's desk were again overlooked, and were found to be full of treasonable matter.

The new Governor, van Assenburgh, had arrived a short time before, received with demonstra-

## THE ACCUSATION

tions from the burgher companies of infantry and the dragoons from Stellenbosch, while the Company's soldiers were collected outside the Castle enclosure, trumpets sounding, the burghers ranged before the gates. From the balcony of the Castle, assisted by the Honourable Political Council, "he had made," says the journalist, "a very affectionate sweet speech." Were the people willing to receive him as their lawful governor and chief? they were asked, to which the burghers replied, loudly and joyfully, "Yes." After which the Secunde had given up the keys, and he and all the members of Council, with "many signs of tender love and affection" (I quote from the journal), had wished van Assenburgh happiness, and been thanked by his Honour "in the sweetest, kindest, and most agreeable manner." The Company's men within the Castle and the burghers without fired three volleys, answered by the Castle guns, and rejoicings were general.

The last morning came. The drums were beaten through the streets to signify that the fleet of fifteen ships was ready to sail home. Quietly enough the exiled man embarked with his friends, Frans, who had married one of the Wessels family, leaving without his wife and baby of three weeks old, who followed him later. Only old Governor Simon, with what thoughts we do not know, remained behind to finish his days in

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the sunshine amongst the vineyards of Groot Constantia.

Strict orders had been sent from Holland for the despoiling of Vergelegen. The wine house, the slave house, the mill and the cattle sheds were to be left standing. But the estate itself was to be divided into allotments for the good of the Company, and the dwelling house was to be entirely demolished. The exile was only



THE OLD OCTAGON WALL AT VERGELEGEN.

to keep a certain proportion of the value on the farm produce.

As you study the house as it stands now, comparing it with the old drawings and plans, you are convinced that after all the old place was never entirely destroyed. Perhaps his enemy, burgher Jacobus van der Heyden, who bought a good deal of the property, managed in some way to evade the decree. The farmhouse (Boeren-huis) which stood at the far side of the walled octagonal garden has been pulled down,

## THE ACCUSATION

but the walls are practically still in place. The mill is standing, and many of the outer structures, though heaps of small old bricks about the property point to a certain amount of alteration and decay. I cannot help thinking that the house, which fits so comfortably into the design of the enclosure, must be the original, although the front shows only one



VERGELEGEN.

gable instead of the three pictured in the eighteenth century print. In the fine hall within is a glazed partition screen ("porte de visite" is the old colonial name), not unlike that of Stellenberg house. From the space covered by the ground plan, the building can never have been very large, though the avenue, gardens, and outbuildings are planned with a kind of magnificence. A golden desolateness

## OLD CAPE COLONY

hangs over the place. Sheets of sunlight, as I saw it, enveloped the house, slanting through gnarled oaks and the small blue-green leaves of the towering camphor trees. Confronted with the old drawings, their young stiffly-set plantations and trim orange groves, you realize, with a throb, the change and march of time. The open veld of Governor Willem's picture is screened away by great green branches ; the place, and the human passions which haunt it, are dwarfed into insignificance by the lavishness of nature. Only the mountain tops which peer through the mass of foliage are the same as in the days when the garden was planned, and the oaks of the "Company's wood" beyond were young saplings ; and the river Lourens, which forms part of the road through which you enter the curtilage, would have flowed clear and brown then as now.

The story of the van der Stels is ended. Gradually their names dropped out of the Company's roll. Hendrik van der Stel died in Batavia in 1722, president of the College of Heemraden. The last mention of the family in the official papers is in 1740. The last trace I can find anywhere in Holland is in the year 1818, when Barbara Hillegonde van der Stel, wife of Mynardus Ruysch, died at Delft, aged 92. The *Cape of Good Hope Almanack and Directory* for 1837 contains an "African Gardener's and

## THE ACCUSATION

Agriculturist's Calendar, by his Excellency W. A. van der Stel, formerly Governor of the Cape of Good Hope." It has rules for all sorts of agricultural pursuits. Cabbages were to be



THE FARM BELL AT VERGELEGEN.

sown about the full moon in July, August vegetables with a declining moon, and in September when the moon was full ; regulations are given for cutting rushes, sowing grain, grafting trees and tending vineyards ; and directions for the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

care of sheep, fowl, ducks and geese. Whether these are superstitions it is not for me to say ; at least it proves that after more than a hundred years the suggestions of van der Stel the younger were thought worthy of reprint.



EARLY GRANTS OF LAND



## V

### Early Grants of Land

WHEN were the farmhouses of the peninsula and fifty miles inland actually built? At first the question was puzzling. One was instinctively sure that their history had grown with the colony, yet the dated gables are often comparatively modern. Since identifying the freeholds and comparing the design of the gable forms, I have become more and more convinced that it is only the plaster-work as a rule which has been renewed. All these interesting houses have old grants of land dating from the end of the sixteenth century.

The earliest example of all is either at Koornhoop or at Zwaanswijk farm, granted in 1682, two years before the title deeds of Constantia, were made out to Caterina, widow of Hans Ras, "bounded on the east by the land of the Commander," according to the old deed which was actually drawn up six years later. This early home, from which you can see and almost hear the thundering breakers of Bay Falso, has

## OLD CAPE COLONY

a primitive little gable, typical of what may be called the parent shape, from which all the others are developments, and of which there are specimens in the seventeenth century houses of Holland. It is now used as a barn, but the woodwork is all of solid teak, and an avenue



ZWAANSWIJK.

of oaks consequently leads up to the barn instead of the later dwelling house.

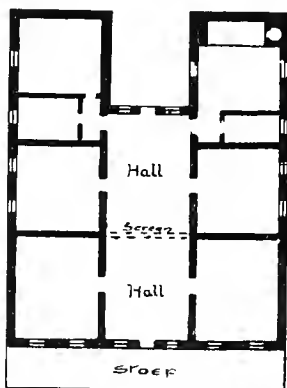
The colonial builder, whoever he was, designed houses one-storied, wider, and suited to the vast surroundings of the veld rather than to the tall narrow streets at home. Their prototypes are more often to be discovered in old prints

## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

of Netherlands houses now destroyed, than in any now existing; but a great many similar outlines can be found in very old houses about Utrecht, through Holland and Belgium, and in England in the Isle of Thanet. Here a Flemish colony had been settled since very early days, their special charter being renewed in the reign of

Queen Elizabeth, when a fresh influx of workers came over. Connexion with Batavia no doubt has given a distinct flavour of the Indies to the colonial house of the Cape. The old American dwelling of "New Amsterdam" had, says Washington Irving, "gable ends of small black and yellow Dutch bricks,

facing the street, furnished with abundance of large doors and small windows on every floor, the date of its erection curiously designated by iron figures on the front." This is distinctly a town building, an adaptation from the street houses at home. The Cape design, with its stoep front and back and the central hall, used as a dwelling room, and sometimes par-



USUAL PLAN OF HOUSE IN THE  
PENINSULA.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

tioned with a screen into a "voorhuis" or entrance, and a dining-room behind, is, on the other hand, suitable to open spaces, and clearly Batavian in origin; only that in the latter the open-air "stoep" of Table Bay is represented by the covered "gallery" or verandah before and behind, and the central hall goes by the name of "middengallerij."

The history of a new country is practically the history of a few individuals, and it is comparatively easy to trace, through a handful of men, the owners of the oldest farms. The five ringleaders of the van der Stel cabal, the "mutinous and malicious people" who were removed to the Fatherland, were Henning Huis-ing, Jacobus van der Heyden, Ferdinandus Appel, Pieter van der Byl and Jan van Meerlant. In the words of the despatch of 1706: "As before stated, their envy and jealousy are directed against the Company's servants who possess any land, viz. the Governor, the Second Merchant Samuel Elzevier, the Fiscal Johan Blesius, the minister Petrus Kalden, the captain, Olof Bergh, the cellar-master, Jacobus de Wet, and the chief surgeon, Willem ten Damme." Starting with those men and with their friends, we come to nearly all the best of the old freeholds, with the exception of those granted to the French settlers, and occasionally to the forgotten history of old names and old divisions of land.

## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

Let us first take the "Company's men" and Frans van der Stel. No doubt some houses have been lost sight of by reason of the confiscation of property held by the Company's officers at the time of the van der Stel exile.

Jacobus de Wet, the cellar-master, would have been obliged to relinquish his farm on the Liesbeeck River. Possibly it was the interesting house Valkenberg: gabled, with walls and gates like the earliest homesteads; named too, evidently, after Commissioner Valkenier, which he, as a Company's officer, could have done. More land at "Tiger Vlei, in the Cape district," was granted him by Governor Willem in 1704; it must, I think, have been near by. Willem ten Damme had a modest enough farm at Oliphants Kop in the Koeberg; you may see it any day on the road to Malmesbury, under the shelter of an odd-shaped little hill. Fiscal Blesius, though he was accused of receiving bribes from the Governor's friends, seems to have escaped without reprimand, and there is no mention of his farm at Simon's Vallei passing away from him. The homestead, called after the elder van der Stel who granted it, was one of the most considerable of the time. "Together with the house of Huising," said Governor Willem, it "was larger and higher" than his own. The long white walls are spread out with a kind of grandeur on the stretch of land between Klap-

## OLD CAPE COLONY

mutts and the kopje of Babylons Toren, or Tower, and show what a large space was enclosed, though they now encircle an altered and modernized house. Captain Olof Bergh had bought the old Company's station of the Kuylen across the flats (Kuils River). It was sold in 1701, together with "Elsjes Kraal and a good large shed," and considered to be "about four hours from the Castle." Elsjes Kraal is about twelve miles out ; one has to imagine the bullock carts ploughing over the sand and the brushwood at three miles an hour. The Kuylen consisted only of "an old homestead, with two fairly good sheds and an earthen kraal," and certainly no trace of any old house is left.

I do not know if the present Elsenberg, Sieur Samuel Elzevier's house, represents the building of the exiled Secunde ; the "splendid house" of which the mutineers speak so much. It had been granted him by Simon van der Stel, and was doubtless fine enough from the first, since it caused so much jealousy. The "Accusation" asserts that he had included within his domain some of the Company's grazing land at Klapmuts. Later it was much altered and built over ; but the mill belongs to the time of Elzevier, and is mentioned in the Company's Journal. Although a later writer speaks of the walled river, so wonderfully picturesque as it lies below the old house, being made at the end of the



## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

eighteenth century, I think it probably belongs to Elzevier's period. It brings us back to a very early time, when the buildings of the settlers were full of such canal-like reminiscences of Holland. Like Simon's Vallei, though in a less degree, walls and gates of plastered brick separate the homestead from the rolling country



WALLED RIVER, ELSENBERG.

that sweeps downward towards Stellenbosch. It was an artistic thought indeed which prompted the old founder to enclose the policy of his house within low walls, detaching it from the limitless mountain side, much as an artist rules a line to cut off his drawing from a waste of white paper. All the old houses are thus enclosed, though in some cases when materials were very scarce in the Colony, the wall was sold to a neighbour

## OLD CAPE COLONY

for repairs or reconstruction, or used to put up outbuildings for the homestead itself. Elsenberg is haunted by legends of many periods, and the eighteenth century owner Melk did much to improve it. But the plan of the place is probably that of Sieur Samuel Elzevier. The name is not unknown in England, since the Government of the Cape have taken over the farm as an agricultural college.

Zandvliet, the house of minister Kalden, lies on the edge of the sandy veld between the sea and Hottentots Holland. His land, Jacobus van der Heyden the caballer asserted, should have belonged by right to the church at Stellenbosch, and on those grounds minister Le Boucq was greatly concerned against him. Admiral Stavorinus, who collected the gossip of sixty years later, says that Kalden was exceedingly unpopular ; indeed, he was accused of asking, " what he would do at the Cape if the Governor and Secunde were not there." He " occupied himself," says the Admiral, " more with his farm than his pulpit." Once when preaching at the Cape, he stopped in his sermon on hearing several heavy carts go by the church. " Prithee, my friend," called he to the clerk, " look out and see if that is my wine passing." The oldest buildings of the farm were being pulled down the very day I had made a pilgrimage to draw them.

The two freeholds of Frans van der Stel, Parel

## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

Vallei, according to Valentyn within sight of the stoep or balcony of Vergelegen (this evidently while the thickly-surrounding trees were still young), and Paarde Vallei, set in a fold of the Heldeberg, are both beautiful spots. The second house is certainly very old as the Colony counts age; the woodwork in the earlier part of the building is of teak, the slightly later additions are in colonial yellow-wood. I hear that the



OLD TEAK DOOR AT PAARDE VALLEI.

house has gone through a period of "improvement" since I saw it. It commands one of the most enchanting views of that romantic scenery: the glistening sand of the shore and the rolling breakers in full view, while oak trees stand about the enclosure, and a panorama of blue mountains surround you. Admiral Stavorinus, travelling thither at the end of the eighteenth century, was kindly received by the owner de Vos. "It was already dark," says the Admiral, "when

## OLD CAPE COLONY

we arrived, and five of us came in together. . . . We received a hearty welcome from this hospitable countryman, and were soon as easy and familiar together as if we had known each other all our lives. We observed no derangement or extraordinary bustle in the family on account of so many unexpected guests. A good supper of nine dishes, and comfortable separate beds for each of us, proved that we were not the first people who had experienced the hospitality of these honest people." It was strange to find on one of the window-panes, amongst a collection of old names, that of De Vos, clearly enough cut.

If grants made to the French settlers are ruled out, I think all the other fine old houses belonged to enemies of the Van der Stels. Adam Tas had owned his farm near the Papagaiberg at Stellenbosch since 1683, three years before the building of Constantia, and it is therefore one of the oldest houses. He is said to have named it "Libertas" on his successful return from trial in the Fatherland, after he had brought about the disgrace of the men he hated. Much of the house was rebuilt some ninety years later and is dull to look at. But the hall, lighted by small deep-set windows, with a teak-doored fireplace like that of Meerlust, teak beamed roof, doors and flooring, is evidently the original room. Here, hatching the movement against the unlucky Governor, together with the "godly Englebertus

## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

Franciscus Le Boucq," and the "chaste Mrs. Maria van Loon," has sat the "virtuous Mrs. Tas," called by the caballers an "example to all Cape women." A German artist, who decorated several of the homesteads about the year 1771, has done some very creditable frescoes at Libertas, and at the wine house is a pretty old farm bell, inscribed "ME FECIT AMSTELLODAMI, ANNO 1732."



FRESCOED WALL AND TEAK DOORED FIREPLACE AT LIBERTAS.

Meerlust, the freehold of Huising, was built, according to Valentyn, in the time of Willem Adriaan's administration. If so, the 541 planks, beams, and spars bought by Huising from the Company between the years 1701 and 1703, were probably for its raising. To the old house belong some anecdotes of later times. Behind is a door leading by steps into the old hall. It

## OLD CAPE COLONY

was probably on this stoep facing the mountains that many years after the time of Huising, when the English took possession of the Cape, General Janssens sat gloomily, with bitter thoughts in his heart of the Waldeck allies whose desertion had lost him the day at the battle of Blaauwberg. To him appeared the captain of this very regiment, for the purpose of making some futile apology. But his intentions were frustrated by the embittered General, who in a fit of passion kicked him from the top of the steps to the bottom.

In the time following, when Colonists were required to take an oath of allegiance to the English, Mr. Myburgh, the owner of Meerlust, who was strongly anti-English, absolutely refused to conform. In protest against his protest, a company of dragoons were then quartered on him. But the clever old farmer knew his men. His hospitable South African spirit would probably have rendered him incapable of rudeness even to a compulsory guest, and he gave a warm invitation to the newly-married wife of the captain of the dragoons (Captain Story by name) to come and stay at his house. But in addition, he threw open the contents of his cellar to the soldiers, and treated them so royally that they became his devoted slaves, working in his vineyards, and seeking their orders from him rather than their captain. At last the discipline became so lax, and the situation so absurd, that the men had to

## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

be removed; and we do not hear that the old gentleman was ever forced to take the oath which he so bitterly resented.

Jacobus van der Heyden, one of the five chief malcontents, had a house in Table Valley not far from the Castle. His farm was Overvellen, in the Berg River, but though entered in the book



MEERLUST, EERSTE RIVIER.

of freeholds, I could not trace it anywhere. Perhaps the name has been altered. Guiliam du Toit's farm, "Aan het Pad," at Stellenbosch is now called Cloetesdal. The present well-known farm of Meerlust, in the Drakenstein, where a colony of young Englishmen fruit-farm under the most approved methods, was once that of the caballer Claas Diepenaaw, granted him in 1693 by Simon van der Stel, and by him called "De

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Enzaamheid," or the Solitary. Jan van Meerland had been granted by Willem Adriaan the farm of Meerendal in the Tygerberg, three miles north-east of the modern village of d'Urban. The district was then wine-growing, but now is corn-producing, and somehow, perhaps because I happened on less attractive people than in the other divisions, the country seemed to lack charm. The



VREDENBERG IN THE MODDERGAT.

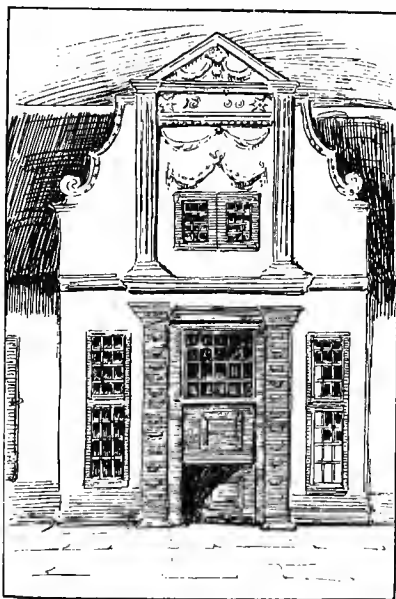
old house is quite modernized and ordinary, but the view from it is superb, and as you gaze at the roads, still sandy, and crossing drifts whose stony beds may upset the unwary, you marvel at both the energy and the leisure of these eighteenth century men who appear to have met so often and from such distances.

Moddergat district was at one time cut off from Stellenbosch by the river, and though Willem van der Stel built a bridge, it was not afterwards



## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

kept in repair. The name means "mud hole," owing, I suppose, to the overflow of the Eerste Rivier on one side and the river Laurens on the other. To Pieter van der Byl had been granted



LATE GABLE OF VREDENBERG.

Vredenberg in the Moddergat, under the Helderberg or Clear mountain, the spur of the Hottentots Holland range. He it was who had persuaded men to sign the "Accusation," by simply telling them it was a petition to trade freely with their wines. The beautiful old homestead lies under

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the peak of the Helderberg, enclosed in its long white walls. The gable is modern, dated 1800, and very like the gable added to Parel Vallei in the same year, serving well to show the small alterations in detail which give to the houses, all so alike, a special individual interest. The stables, wine house and slave quarters are old, and live in tradition as the scene of one of the slave murders, for here the owner, it is said, was killed in cold



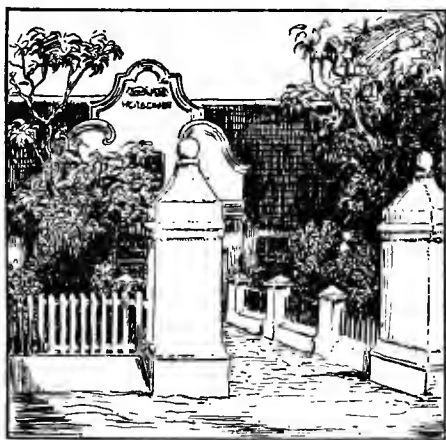
BURIAL PLACE, WELMOED.

blood and the body hidden in the stables was discovered later by the family.

Wessel Pretorius owned a large farm at Eerste Rivier. Here one of the petitioners against van der Stel signed after a "jolly day," but did not quite know what was meant by it, except that it was "for the good of the public." In the original book of freeholds the land is unnamed. Welmoed, it may have been, set amongst mellow old buildings, with near by one of the quiet little graveyards which are so strange and touching to the

## EARLY GRANTS' OF LAND

European, but which are a matter of course in a lonely, far-off place. Or maybe Vergenoegd (close to the house of Meerlust), whose walls tell brightly against the blue distances of the flats facing Table Mountain. The little enclosed garden here is extraordinarily pretty in its quaint formal design, shut in from the buffeting of the



VERGENOEGD.

winds that sweep over the plain. There is a charming archway to the stables here ; and indeed each of the houses have some special variation of the usual scheme, which makes it delightful to the eye. Gateways specially form a feature in this simple architecture. They are built for the pure joy of building, and are as non-utilitarian as the triumphal arch of the ancients.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

For these dwellings of the Cape, even of the early days of the eighteenth century, really belong to a remoter past, to the days of slavery : days when it was no object to the worker to scamp his work and " get on to a new job " ; or to the master to squeeze the maximum amount of labour out of the smallest outlay of time. So that with that curious factor in them of the sacrifice of some one, which seems to underlie all success however apparently easy, they will be, as long as they are suffered to remain, a perpetual pleasure to the artistic mind.

Geduld, granted to Ferdinand Appel, was near by, but there seem to be no remaining buildings. Later he was to make large sums of money from a right to put up houses of accommodation at the warm springs of Hottentots Holland (Caledon), very simple arrangements indeed, as the travellers tell us.

Jan Rotterdam, the first so-called " victim " of the exiled Willem Adriaan, had a farm in the Bottelarij, the district called by Kolbe a " vast desert lying between the Capian and the Stellenboschian Colonies," granted to him by the Governor. When the freehold was made out it too was unnamed ; so I do not know which house it is. It is not quite certain that he remained at the Cape. " The ex-Burgher, Councillor Jan Rotterdam," says a despatch of 1707, " has returned from Batavia . . . and requested permission to remain here a

## EARLY GRANTS OF LAND

year, to wind up his affairs, and in consequence of his pretended illness. This we have granted, though we think that he will now remain longer here amongst his comrades, who have been justified by the Hon. Directors in everything, and have no wish to proceed to the fatherland." Many men of the name of the old rebel were in the employ of the East India Company ; one traces them by graves ; and graves of the Rotterdams are at Palicat, and along the Coromandel coast. At the Cape he seems to be the only representative of his family.

Other old farms there were about here, but not many ; a homestead near the Bottelary is Saxendal, just built at the beginning of the eighteenth century by Michael Sax, a German. The majority of the grants were made by, and connected with, the van der Stel family ; and the ancient story of the country seems to be woven into their history. Passing along the sandy tracks would once have come the " Rev. godly and highly-learned Franciscus Engelbertus Le Boucq " with his two slaves and his iron-shod staff, as he canvassed the country against the Governor and his family. A distant cannon shot may be heard across the veld. It is Simon van der Stel's signal of danger off the coast, warning the colonist of a possible call to arms. Or perhaps you might come on Sheik Joseph, a Hadji of great repute, exiled to the Cape for com-

## OLD CAPE COLONY

binning with the English against the Dutch Company at Java. He lived under surveillance at the Company's station of Eerste Rivier, and was buried amongst the sandhills of the coast of Bay Falso, beyond the farm of Zandvliet. To his tomb the Malays of the Cape still make pilgrimages, cart after cart full of women, bright as tropical flowers in their clothes of green and pink and purple, clean and starched, and men with keen intelligent faces, those with silken coats and turbans having made the pilgrimage to Mecca. But whether the bones of the Sheik are there still in reality who shall say? for when in the year 1704 Joseph's widow and children were allowed at the oft-repeated request of the King of Macassar to leave the Cape, the Company's Council, under Willem van der Stel, wrote cautiously, "Should they be willing to take under their care and carry with them the bones of that same priest, we shall allow it to pass by, shutting our eyes and doing as if we did not see it."







## VI

### Stellenbosch

**H**ARDLY, a writer on South Africa, has failed to note the beautiful situation of Stellenbosch, and the artistic feeling which prompted old van der Stel in his choice. He was on his first tour of inspection and exploration. The "Kuilen" or pools (called in old Dutch the Cuylen), whose name is now corrupted into Kuils River, was the first outpost of the Company across the "Flats." Simon rested here for the night, and then turned inland, and after some wandering chose a place for bivouacking on what he called an island, probably between two branches of the Eerste River, which still waters the district. The spot had been named "Wilde Bosch" or "Wild Wood" by some pioneer. Trees grew there; above the valley lay a long range of serrated mountains, at their feet ran the clear, brown river stained by the roots of the aromatic undergrowths. Once outside the farms and their vineyards I do not think there can be much difference between the scenery of the place now

## OLD CAPE COLONY

and in the seventeenth century. The mountains, blue and opalescent, or pink with sunset, are the same. The ordinary growths of the old veld are there ; the protea or sugar bush, that curious plant which belongs, I believe, to the coal period and is found in fossil growths, beloved by birds who strew its great pink blossoms on the ground, searching for the sweet within ; the bamboo-like plants of the watercourse, which bend and rustle as the scarlet fink flits in and out of his nest overhanging the water. Perhaps there were more puff adders and yellow cobras (it is extraordinary how little you think of them nowadays, and all I ever saw were dead in the dust of the high road), and the wild animals abounded. Simon van der Stel would have seen buck and zebras and elephants, while the baboons would have been more numerous and courageous, and the leopard more often come down the scored side of the mountain to look for his prey.

Here the Commander made up his mind to found a township and to call it by his name. It should be "worthy of the fatherland," he wrote to the Directors, asking their sanction for his new proposal ; rather a cheap bit of sentiment, for he cared so little about the fatherland that he never returned to it ; but no doubt a wise concession to their jealous spirit. For his suggestion was a bold one and quite outside the scheme of the Company.

## STELLENBOSCH

Lack of energy was no fault of the Commander, and the scheme was put into action at once—perhaps without permission. Land was given free to such of the Company's servants as would brave the dangers of wild beasts and the attacks of Hottentots, and three years later a Municipal Council (in old Dutch a Heemad or farm Council) was formed. In the next year, 1682,



A GATE IN STELLENBOSCH.

a school was built. Theal gives several anecdotes of the early life at Stellenbosch, and tells us that the Company supplied the masons and nails for building the school, and the farmers gave the materials. The instruction consisted in learning to read the Bible, to count, to say the Heidelberg catechism, and to sing psalms to the tunes commonly used. At Christmas the Company gave prizes, and the Commander

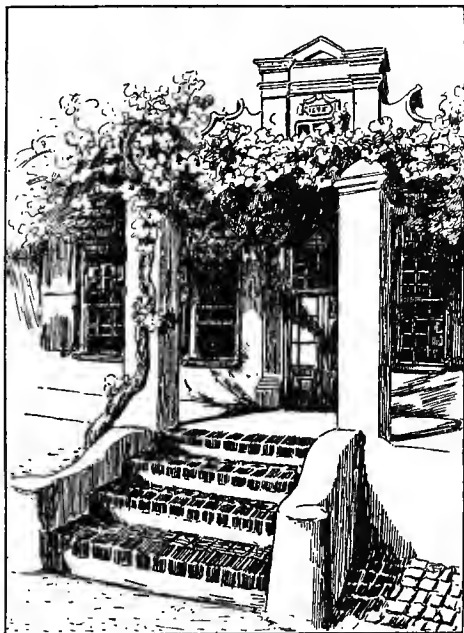
## OLD CAPE COLONY

bestowed a cake on each child. The better the child the larger was the cake. As in all the early colonies, the question of religious instruction was much fought over, and religious legislation was curiously detached from all rules of conduct, and was anything but an element of peace. At first there was no church at Stellenbosch, but the minister from the Cape officiated there from time to time and a "sick visitor" was appointed to read the service on Sundays. The parsonage, said to be the pretty house called "La Gratitude," was finished in 1704, and Minister Bek was the first to live in it.

When Ryklof van Goens, Governor-General of the Indies, stayed at the Cape on his way from Batavia, he went to Stellenbosch, and advised the settlers to plant flax, hemp, and indigo; but none of those were suitable for the climate. Tobacco growing he forbade, as the Company made a profit over its sale. We next hear of its inspection by van Rheeде tot Drakenstein, who authorized it to have a Landdrost (old Dutch for Magistrate); with two Europeans, a horse, and a slave, to assist him. The Landdrost was given a good many powers, and might impose taxes on the inhabitants and compel the burghers to supply wagons, cattle, slaves, or their own personal labour for public purposes. A mill was also to be built to grind corn. Then it was that the Commander named after van Rheeде

## STELLENBOSCH

the beautiful stretch of country beyond Stellenbosch, and the traveller Kolbe insinuates that by doing so he wormed himself into his favour.

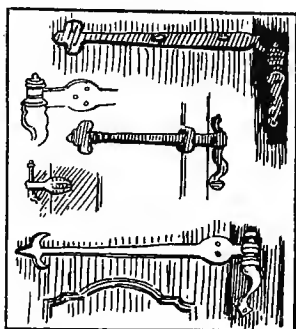


A VINE TRELLISED STOEP, STELLENBOSCH.

So developed the little town which was to figure so largely in the history of the van der Stels. Many fires have devastated the place and it is difficult to know when the finer houses were begun. But Kolbe, the traveller, at quite

## OLD CAPE COLONY

an early date speaks of the houses built for outward show, and certainly the ironwork which is so admirable in this and Drakenstein district—shutter hinges, clasps, and handles—was made by the Company's smith at Stellenbosch to save the trouble and expense of bringing it from the Cape. The "town" was for many years hardly more than the nucleus of a district. A few of the French settlers, as we



SHUTTER HINGES, STELLENBOSCH AND DRAKENSTEIN.

know stopped there, but for the most part the French settlers were moved on to the newer and poorer districts in the Drakenstein and beyond Simonsberg. The power of the Landdrost extended into Drakenstein. Thus we find a letter from the Council in 1704, saying that the freeman Daniel Hugod had complained of a Hottentot kraal near his vineyard, and damage caused to

## STELLENBOSCH

to it by cattle ; and of a dispute caused by Hercules du Prée "assisted by Pieter Becker and François du Prée." Landdrost Ditmar was to inquire into this ; and in consequence of blows given to Hugod by Pieter Becker, the



"LA GRATITUDE" ; BUILT 1704.

latter was to be told to leave for Mauritius by the next ship.

It is difficult to realize that in the days when Landdrost Starrenberg listened in consternation

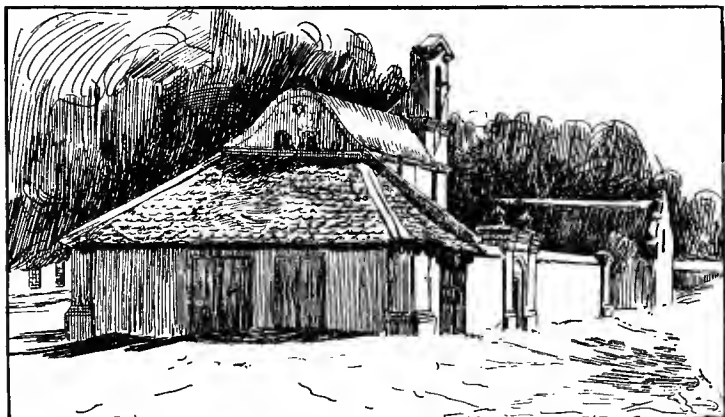
## OLD CAPE COLONY

to the unruly drum of the rebels against Willem van der Stel, the heavily shaded streets were merely planted with oak saplings. Walking under the dense leafy shade of trees whose protection made so much for the unpopularity of the old Governor, you understand how Emerson, who lived in a country with a short past, would rank amongst his "men of heroic mind" the man who plants trees for posterity. The place has figured so largely in the history of the van der Stels, that there seems little else to tell; indeed, save for the many fires, its annals have been quiet enough. In 1710 all the Company's property and twelve houses were burnt; ten years later another fire destroyed the Drosdty where an East Indian exile, the Matheran<sup>\*</sup> Prince Loring Passir, was being detained by the Company. After this we again hear in the journal that the people were rebuilding and improving the houses. The little arsenal or watch tower marked with the V.O.C. of the Company is said to be a considerable age. It bears the late date 1777, but this may have been put on when the more modern market house was built round the earlier structure. It is the date of Governor Tulbagh, when we hear Stellenbosch was improved and that Heemraad Martin Melk (the same who built the Lutheran Church in Cape Town) altered the course of the river, which had flooded the village. Within



## STELLENBOSCH

the arsenal, amongst bricks and rubbish were kept a few years ago twenty-one small cannon, abandoned in the Stellenbosch mountains by General Janssens. These cannon, said the guardian who showed me the arsenal, had been taken from the twenty-one different nations



ARSENAL, STELLENBOSCH.

who occupied the Cape prior to the Dutch. He mentioned Denmark and Portugal, but left the others as a matter for individual research. The old church was not far from the present one, and had a large circular burial ground that was cut up for building purposes in 1782. About this time the burnt Drosdty was rebuilt. Alas! the house has been remodelled in the nineteenth

## OLD CAPE COLONY

century and as the modern Theological College presents an unattractive façade to the old-world street.

At Stellenbosch, the pet child of the Commander, there was a specially organized fair, when the militia was drilled. The target practice which demonstrated the burgher skill, played an important part in the disturbances of later years. The marksmen shot at a target which was shaped like a parrot (Papegaai), and the hill just to the west of Stellenbosch is still called Papegaai Berg. A good description of the old custom is given by Theal. The great prize was for the entire smashing of the Papegaai. It was £5 from the Honourable Company and whatever subscription-money there was on hand. This fair was a yearly function, wagons of visitors went up to it from the Cape, joined, when ships were in the Bay, by as many sailors as could get leave. Uproarious parties they must have been, shouting as they jolted across country in their heavy carts, and brawling in the quiet village street.

From the farms about here has come much fine old furniture, spoiled too often by the depredations of the pedlar, who once on a time persuaded the owners to sell him the silver handles and mountings, keyhole escutcheons, and hinges. The settlers were rich enough, and we hear in the papers of a robbery in 1707 where

## STELLENBOSCH

more than a hundred Ryks dollars, a silver purse with eight diamonds, a silver mounted belt,



VERY OLD HOUSE IN STELLENBOSCH.

an under waistcoat with twenty-four silver buttons, sixteen buttons with silver plates, and other minor things, were stolen from an inconsiderable

## OLD CAPE COLONY

house. Blue and white Oriental china has been found in the gabled houses around, here, too, the handsome brass charcoal burners for warming coffee, and the comically massive "cuspidores" or spittoons of brass. Nooitgedacht, not far off, has a good rather late curved gable and a fine hall. It is said to have once been a manufactory or workshop of the beautiful Cape furniture. Many locally historic houses are about. Idas Vallei, the old home of the Cloete family. Coetzenberg, the farm of Dirk Coetzee, who joined the mutiny against Willem van der Stel. Mulders Vallei, belonging in 1087 to Landdrost Mulder (he seems first to have been granted "Welvernoegd" in the Paardenberg). Aan het Pa, given in 1687 by the elder van der Stel to the rebel Guiliam du Toit. It is recorded that on passing the door of the Company's Secretary at Stellenbosch he called out, "If you wish to have some fatherland line with which to make halters for hanging yourself, I have one ready at my house." Further off to the south-east lies Jonkers Hoek, known in England from the Government trout farm in the valley. Here, in 1715, was a great flood, when a waterspout burst in the mountain behind Jan de Jonkers farm, and the swirling water tore out the banks of the river, and thousands of tons of soil from the vineyards, filling the holes with drift sand. The houses of the village were damaged, says

## STELLENBOSCH

the Company's journal; but there is no village now, only scattered houses, fine, and finely set amongst the overhanging sides of the mountain, and up the long narrow valley.

Captain Hendrik Hop, descendant no doubt of the old Amsterdam merchant family, making a journey inland by order of Governor Ryk Tulbagh in 1778, tells us that in the fire of 1710 which had been caused by the slave of Landdrost de Meurs, who was bringing his master a light for his pipe, all the houses of Stellenbosch save two or three had been burnt. One could resent the importance of the pipe, almost absurdly characteristic, were it not that the fifty houses which now constituted the village were subsequently rebuilt "better than before." The oaks had by this time grown huge, and the streets with their rivulets must have been much as now. John Barrow, about ten years later, gives a more detailed and charming account of the place with its vineyards and gardens, and says that there were about seventy inhabitants and that the trees were "not inferior in size to the larger elms in Hyde Park." Yet several of the largest had been sacrificed a few years before to raise a small sum for parish expenses, the finest being sold for 20 Ryks dollars, or £4. "For such a barbarous act" he remarks, "the villagers in some countries would have been apt to hang both the Landdrost and Heemraaden upon the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

branches." Also he says, "the most excellent house of the Landdrost is guarded by two venerable oaks." Admiral Stavorinus speaks of the handsome iron gate to the circular churchyard. I have often wondered where the old gates have gone which almost certainly belonged to the many beautiful gateways. I do not think



A SHADY STREET, STELLENBOSCH.

one now exists, either at Stellenbosch or anywhere else.

If you arrive at Stellenbosch at two or three o'clock of a summer afternoon, an extraordinary stillness reigns. The whole town is asleep ; shutters are closed, hardly a dog barks, the rustle of the heavy leaved branches and the tinkle of streamlets are the only audible sounds. It is said that a Stellenbosch burgher consulted his doctor for

## STELLENBOSCH

insomnia, and on being asked at what hour of the night he most suffered, exclaimed : " It is not at night that I suffer ; I sleep well at night. But nowadays I cannot get to sleep in the afternoon." I do not know if the story is true. As afternoon wears on, the sleepers awake. Day cools to the fresh South African evening, coffee and pipes appear on the stoep, and through flickering tree shadows the sunshine of the afternoon slants low. Alas for the time when the old-world life shall have disappeared with the gable and the stoep of the old-world builder ! for they are disappearing. Never again will you find a better expression of the past, a quaint everyday past, forgotten of history and laid aside by the trend of modern thought, as in these little townships built by a northern race, developed under a southern sun, apart from fashion and jostle, without the great ambitions which for the most part make for misery. So that for a brief time the new-comer feels as one " carried away by the fairies into some pleasant place."





## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK



## VII

### Drakenstein and Frenchhoek

“**D**RAKENSTEIN,” wrote Governor Willem van der Stel, “is a bad and watery country where people live too near each other and cannot get on.” The sentence reads quaintly enough to-day, when so many a translucent plum and smooth nectarine, which make Covent Garden Market in winter a thing of beauty, ripen their sunburnt faces in the district. As you drop over the long hill from Stellenbosch you leave behind you many charming houses with twisted chimneys and curved gables, with bell towers for their old “hanging bells”: houses with high stoeps, shaded by oak trees, where finks weave their hanging nests and chatter in the branches. Schoongezigt, with its peach trees and violet beds, the farm of Mr. J. X. Merriman, is one of the most attractive of those quiet homes, basking in the golden sunshine, set in a panorama of mountain peaks, faintly outlined one behind the other. You are now entering what Kolbe in the eighteenth century called the district of “Bange

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Hoek" or Fearful Corner. "It is frequently infested," he says, "with lions and tigers, and leads you on the edge of precipices and pits of water." True it is that the Rev. Bek, the minister from Stellenbosch, complained very bitterly of



SCHOONGEZIGT.

having to go over this same track to officiate to the French congregation of Drakenstein. It was three hours off, he said, and hard work in the cold and wet, and when the roads were so slippery and full of mud holes.

But you must dream yourself back for a moment into the days of the first settlers in Groot Draken-

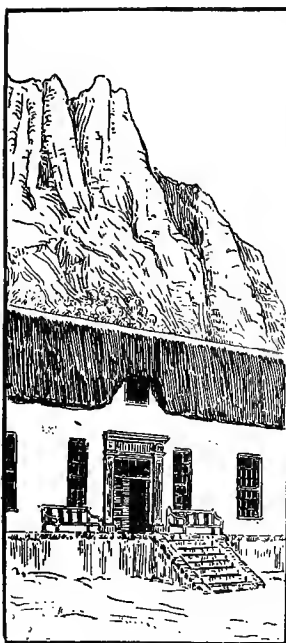
## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

stein ; the days of the elder and the younger van der Stel. The valley has been named after van Rheede tot Drakenstein ; Simonsberg, the mountain which dominates it, after Governor Simon. The little town of Stellenbosch is founded ; indeed the minister's house is probably built, and the streets are marked out by rows of young oaks, bearing here and there those awe-inspiring notices of the flogging meted to any one who injured them. The 176 Huguenot emigrants have arrived, and helped by wagons from the burghers of the neighbourhood, have been settled in a long line down the Drakenstein Valley. The original books of these old freeholds may still be looked through in the Surveyor-General's office at Cape Town.

But though the settlers are kindly enough treated, and the rich merchant city of Batavia has sent them over a thousand dollars as a gift, they are not content, for the Company has stipulated that they should not live near each other. Therefore in many cases they have relinquished the lands portioned to them, and taken service with each other. We will follow the valley, and the farms lie on each side of us.

To the right of the high road is Bethliem farm, granted to the French minister Simond ; but everything points to his having lived elsewhere. Then comes " Good Hope ". In the tall peak behind was once a silver and copper mine, mentioned indeed by Kolbe, but never of any im-

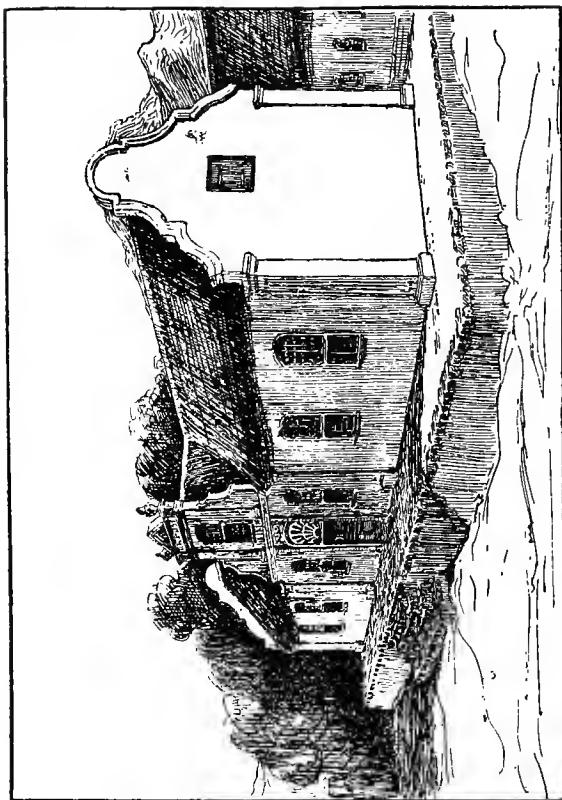
## OLD CAPE COLONY



GOOD HOPE.

portance. A little further down the pass (you are now about ten miles from Stellenbosch and thirty-eight from Cape Town) you come to "Rhone and Languedoc"; in the heart now of the fruit valley. This freehold was granted in 1691 to Pierre Benozzi; probably the Pierre Benezet or Benozzi who, together with Pierre Sabatier (the latter a notable Huguenot name) received 170 guilders from the Batavian gift of 1690.

The beautiful little house is, like nearly all the country houses, planned with a long central hall running from front to back, with wings on each side. These leave an open space in the centre. The space forms a little court, where you may sit at peace though the wind booms like great guns in the mountains. Like many of the finer houses, Rhone has a central screen of teak, which can be pushed back at will, and the whole length of

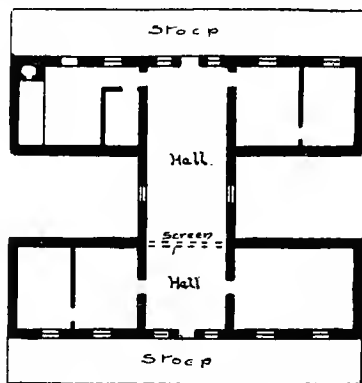


RHONE AND LANGUEDOC.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the house made available. In Lutheran days the halls were used for dancing and general festivities.

A mile further on, according to the regulation of the Company, is Bosch en Dal (wood and valley). Here the screen is inlaid with ebony in fan patterns, which give it something of a Chippendale air. The great stoep runs all round the house, with



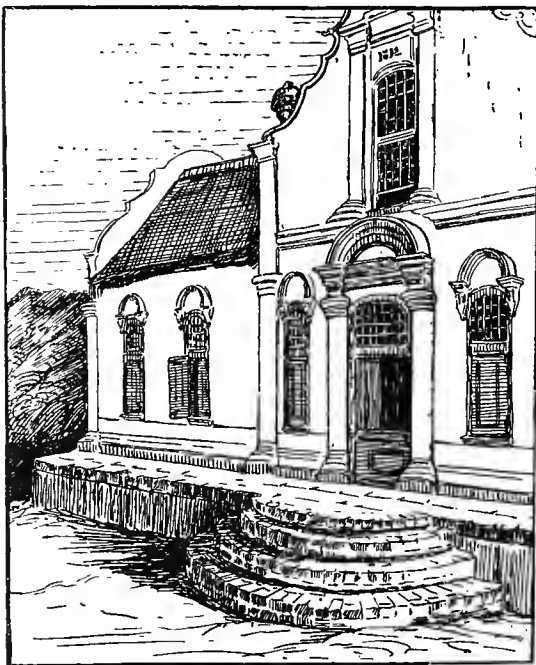
USUAL PLAN OF HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY.

circular steps leading to the garden and vineyard below, and the wine house and old slave quarters form, as usual, a second courtyard behind. Once, before the days of the orange disease (the dolthesia, a fluffy white scale to look at), the garden here was full of orange trees. Vines replaced the oranges. Then came the vine disease, the phylloxera, and destroyed the vines. It is the brief history of many a farm in this district. But



## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

the phylloxera has been successfully combated; and a useful ladybird, imported from California with some trepidation, as it was feared it might play the part of the rabbit in Australia, has, I

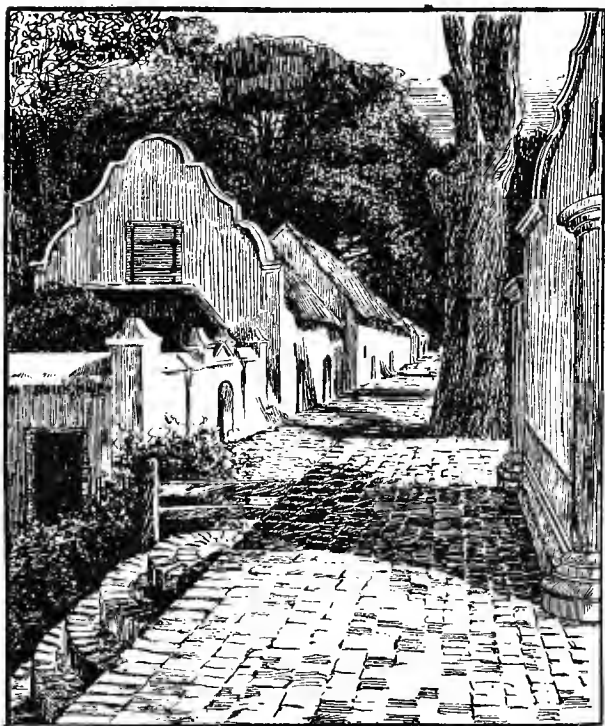


BOSCH EN DAL.

understand, finally destroyed the orange blight. Bosch en Dal freehold was granted by van der Stel in 1690 to the de la Nois, or de Lanoy, family, who had been refugees in Holland since

## OLD CAPE COLONY

1648. The gable is late, and dated 1812. These three houses are amongst those bought, with their land, by Mr. C. J. Rhodes as fruit farms.

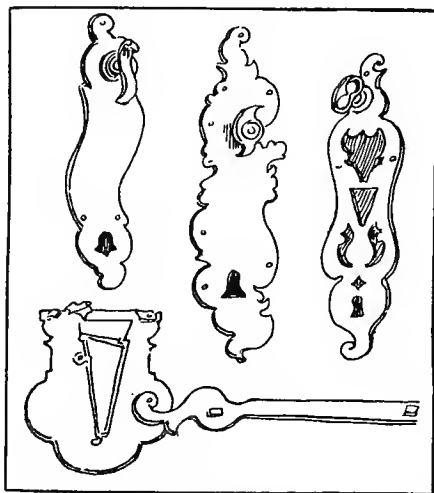


BOSCH EN DAL STOEP.

Within sight is Lekkerwyn, Mr. Pickstone's farm, a little house finely modernized, full of Colonial-made furniture and blue and white

## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

Oriental china. Long ago it belonged to Ary Lekkerwyn, whose pleasant name of "good wine" has stuck to the place. His grant was in 1690, and we know no more of him than that he married one of the de Lanoy's of Boschendal near by, and that the Frenchman, Jacques de Savoye,



DOOR FURNITURE AT DRAKENSTEIN AND THE CAPE.

mentions in a letter that Ary had been "struck on the head with a stick in Drakenstein."

Without appearing to exaggerate, it is not easy to describe the extraordinary impression of beauty these old farms make upon the newcomer. At the first introduction no one could have been less inclined to appreciate them than myself.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Dusty, hot, tired, bicycling on a loose sandy road, with a gusty wind sweeping over the veld; ignorant of the history of the place, one after the other white gables and long low walls came into sight, and personal discomfort was forgotten. Even then half the magic of the place was unrevealed; the cool Berg river beyond the slope of the orchards and vineyards: bathe there in the very early morning, if you have the chance, and eat apricots afterwards. The radiant starlit nights, when you watch perhaps the flame of fields of immortelles, lit by some chance spark, burning themselves out in lonely splendour against the sky-line of the mountains. And the wonderful detail of the houses, the lowered screens, the teak wall cupboards and ebony inlaid woodwork, the panelled doors with their ornamental escutcheons and crutch handles.

Leaving on your right Meerlust with its old gables, a few miles further you come to the little village of Simondium. Undoubtedly it was called after the first French minister, Pierre Simond, and I believe that here he lived under the protection of Jacques de Savoye, the richest and most influential of the French refugees. About this gentleman, who had a curious reputation for truculence and self-assertion, the Company's officers held some correspondence, in which they discussed the possibility of reasons other than religious which had caused him to become a

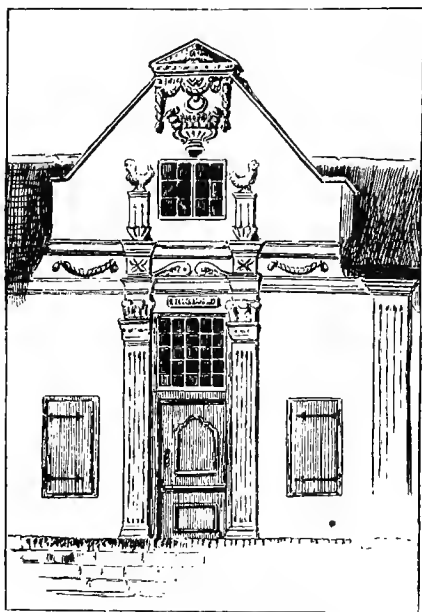
## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

Colonist. Simon van der Stel complained that these, the two most important members of the community, the minister Simond and the Heemraad Jacques de Savoye, were continually wrangling, causing troubles amongst the husbandmen, and interrupting their work. The ornamental gables of "Vrede en Lust next to Lust en Vrede," as it stands in the old book of freeholds, show amongst the trees at Simondium, a house with a large ground plan, and with the only example I saw of a slave house with barred windows. Under the high stoep is a sort of cellar which was used, says tradition, for punishing the slaves. The farm was granted by Simon van der Stel to de Savoye, and perhaps the beautiful little house of "Bien Donné," not far off, may have been built by him for the minister. The name, the design of the house, and the woodwork are all very old, though I could not find it mentioned in the book of freeholds. The shell ornament of the gables is the same as in de Savoye's homestead, but the plaster work on the front is comparatively modern.

No sooner had the Frenchmen built shelters for themselves than they had applied for a school, for which permission was granted; Paul Roux of Orange being appointed master. Then they asked for a church, but Simon van der Stel, harassed by his obligations to the Company and the probability of a war with France, refused point blank; and with some temper told them

## OLD CAPE COLONY

to "remain a branch of the Stellenbosch congregation." Permission for a church was conceded later, on condition that the Colonists were separated. But likely enough they never waited for



BIEN DONNÉ, FRONT GABLE.

leave, as the injunction to live apart was disregarded. A church of some sort, probably the "sorry barn" mentioned by Kolbe, was certainly built at Simondium; people still remember its remains: piles of small red bricks near what is

## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

now the high road. Simond, the minister, eventually returned to France. Marguerite de Savoye, daughter of the turbulent old Jacques, who by his demands and his discontent was a continual thorn in the flesh of Governor van der Stel, married a



BIEN DONNÉ.

man entitled variously by the schoolmaster as Christoffe Cnayman, Senayment, Seniemen, Seniman, and finally Snijman. It is a pleasure to find that Paul Roux of Orange mastered the name at last.

The second van der Stel certainly made great efforts to support the French, which must have contributed to his disfavour with the burghers. In

## OLD CAPE COLONY

1701 Simond returned home and a new minister was sent out by the Company. In 1703 we find Willem Adriaan writing to beg for the congregation of Drakenstein, who consisted of "more than a hundred adult and married persons, with a large number of children," might have the services of the new minister, the Rev. Bek. "Since the departure of their minister, Pierre Simond, they are, so to speak, entirely deprived of their religious services, and the more so that the Rev. Hendrik Bek, who has taken the place of the Rev. Simond and is well versed in French and Dutch, has been ordered by you in your despatch of the 20th September, 1701, to preach only in the Dutch language, though the aged among them who do not know our language should be visited by him, advised and comforted. And as the congregation most humbly prays, and the Rev. Bek considers himself able to preach the Word of God in their own language once a fortnight, we have not been able to refrain from writing in their favour, at their pressing request, and beg of you according to your usual kindness that you may be pleased to make some alteration in that order and to lighten it."

I do not find in any of the old dispatches a suggestion that Frenchhoek was treated as a different colony, and I believe it was included in the Drakenstein. Eighteenth century authority had decided that it was safer for farmers in lonely



## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

places to reside within sight and earshot of each other, for terrible tragedies had occurred in the lonely districts of the earlier settlements, Stellenbosch and Tygerberg. All along the road from Groot Drakenstein Valley to the rocky ridges which close in the mountain circle of the Frenchhoek basin, gabled farms are set amongst the trees. Here at least there was no pretence of mingling the two nationalities. The names all attest their origin. La Cotte, Cabrière, La Provence, Champagne, La terre de Lucque, Burgundy, Dauphiné, are found one after the other, though in the modern pronunciation they are not always recognizable. Before the advent of the French the valley had been called Oliphant's Hoek, or Elephant's Corner. Undergrowth and thick scrub abounded, and the great animals came there in the breeding season, leaving soon after. One of the Frenchhoek people (he is an old man), tells how his grandfather watched the departure of the last elephant with her calf. Eastwards over the mountain side they went, and none were ever seen again. On the slippery side of the ridge which circles the valley is a curious path, half rock, half great stones, laid in a kind of rude order. Tradition there says that it was made by the elephants, and indeed, a despatch of Governor Simon van der Stel in the seventeenth century mentions the same thing. A great hole is still shown, which was a favourite lair.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

The place is only forty-five miles or so from Cape Town. A railway will soon be made, and greatly may it increase the prosperity. Yet one has regrets; the eternal regret for the thing that



POMEGRANATES AT FRENCHHOEK.

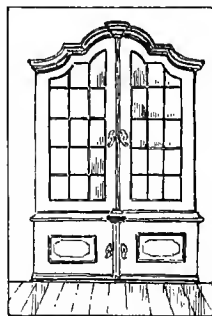
is passing. Only a very short time ago in entering Frenchhoek you entered an earlier century with its quaintness and its charm. No doubt things had changed even then. The cattle no longer went to Saldanah Bay for winter pasturage, looking forward restlessly to their journey, and on the road lying at night like docile children round the camp fire. Soon, perhaps, the farmer will no longer press his own wine, be his vineyard only the size of a dining table, and the jolting carts will rattle no more

from the grape rows to the little wine houses.

The present houses are charming, but the shelters of the first settlers were hastily built and poor. They cut their way through the bushes, and chose indeed one superb site after another ;

## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

it would have been difficult to do otherwise, but there was little time and money to spend on the adornment of the sheltering walls. Hence you will find near most of these graceful little houses the remains of an earlier ruder erection. Three of the finest houses are on sites granted to the three brothers de Villiers. Abraham de Villiers owned the farm of Laborie (commonly called L'Abri), surrounded by great oaks, with teak ceilings and floors to the dwelling rooms, teak china cupboards let into the walls. Alas ! the thatch is gone, as it will soon go everywhere, on account of the heavy insurance asked for it ; and with the thatch down in most cases, for want of a little care and a little knowledge of how to do things, comes the old gable.



TEAK CHINA CUPBOARD  
IN A DRAKENSTEIN FARM.

Nearer the mountain side are Burgundy and Dauphiné, the farms of Pierre and Jacob de Villiers. The men were married respectively to Margarithé Gardiol, whose father owned La Cotte, and Elizabeth Taillefer, whose farm of Picardie is mentioned by eighteenth century travellers as very luxuriant and well cared for. Behind the two houses are the ruins of the first building.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Dauphiné, fine and ornamental, is dated 1800. It is surrounded by huge trees, and has a tall



DAUPHINÉ.

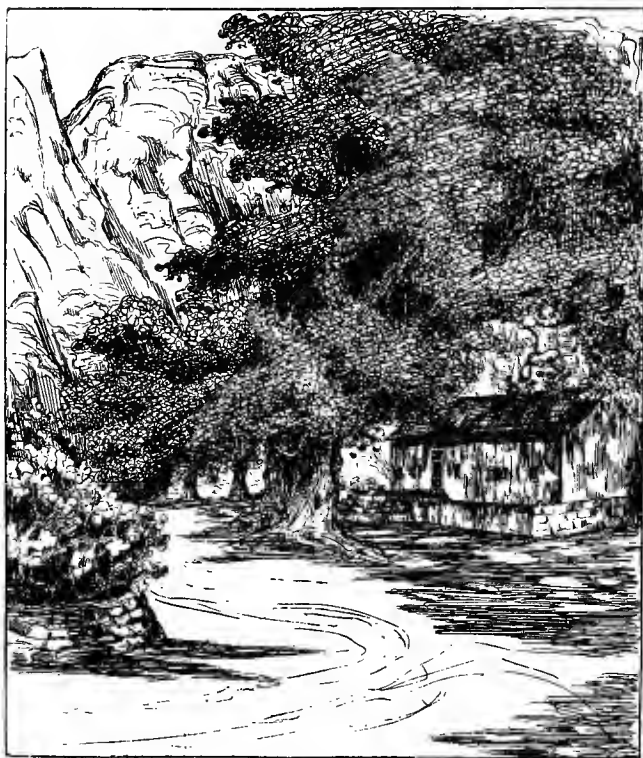
cypress which must date from the earliest times. Burgundy, a quaint little barn-like house with

## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

rude elaborate plaster-work patterns, is charming too, with its green shutters and mountain background. Large leaved oaks, which only in early springtime when the greenery is young and small, look like their cousins of Europe, grow almost up the steep sides of the mountain behind. In this the Frenchman most faithfully carried out orders from headquarters, so that his farm has become in many cases a wonder of beauty. The trees have shot up so rapidly that this wood is of very little use as timber. Their green heads tell grandly against the desolate rocks; where the "tyger" or leopard of the district still lingers, and may surprise the farmer by a midnight attention to his sheep, or where the dog-face of a baboon may peer at you curiously from above a kranz. Passing another fine old tree-shaded homestead, you find very near these wild cliffs the curious little house of Bochenhouts Kloof, a farm granted by Simon van der Stel to Jan Roux. It is the house of a pioneer, with its tiny heavy shuttered windows, easy to barricade and defend, and high platform or stoep; and the extraordinary growth of the trees, planted when the house was built, make it a characteristic "van der Stel farm." There are but few more old houses; for the place was merely a cluster of homesteads. Perhaps the most interesting of these is La Cotte, granted in 1694 to Jean Gardiol by the elder van der Stel. Gardiol is said to have planted the ancient oak

## OLD CAPE COLONY

which grows by the house from an acorn brought over in his pocket from the sunny land of France.



BOCHENHOUTS KLOOF.

A few years ago descendants of Daniel Hugod lived there ; he, you will find, was granted Zion farm in the Drakenstein by Governor Simon.

## DRAKENSTEIN AND FRENCHHOEK

Another farm, where the visitor to Frenchhoek most often stays, is called "Keer Weder," or "Turn Back," after the name given in discouragement by the weary pioneers to the mountain which barred their progress.

Nearly all the old furniture has passed away from Frenchhoek, the silver-handled wardrobes the cane-seated chairs. An interesting old chair,



VIEW ACROSS FRENCHHOEK FROM LA COTTE.

evidently one of those carved by Indian or Malay exiles at Robben Island, belongs to one family. This, with a little fine old china and a great German Bible, were the only relics I could find. By reason of their history it is unlikely that the French fugitives ever owned so much furniture as the Dutch Colonist, and the miniatures and snuff-boxes of which I heard have been sold or dispersed, and I think were not very numerous. More strange is the total lack of tradition, for those old

## OLD CAPE COLONY

refugees should have had stirring tales to tell, and from two or three hundred years is not an unprecedented record. But poverty is a great obliterater, and the Company's rule was severe. Already in 1782 the French traveller Le Valliant could find no trace of nationality save in the hair and complexions of the settlers, which was slightly darker than their Dutch neighbours, and in their bread, which they made "after the French manner."



PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND  
BEYOND



## VIII

### Paarl, Tulbagh, Ceres and Beyond

**I**T was long before Paarl owned many interesting houses. The "pearl and diamond mountain" was indeed discovered and named by the earliest explorers, but the men who built their homes round it were drafts of the less successful farmers from Stellenbosch and Drakenstein. They had begun, remarked Kolbe, with "encumbrances and were obliged to contract many debts which were undischarged, and these encumbrances . . . in all probability, hinder 'em from erecting houses for Pleasure and Parade, as the Capians and Stellenboschians have done in great numbers. Some of the refugees and their descendants who have had better success than ordinary have erected such houses, but the generality of 'em are still content to dwell in cots."

The Paarl church was begun in 1717, partly out of funds bequeathed by Henning Huising, who soon after the van der Stel exile became one of the most important men in the Colony, and com-

## OLD CAPE COLONY

pounded with his conscience by giving to various charitable funds. Kolbe's account of the place is very vague, and his description of the "sorry building which you could take for an ordinary barn" would point to the Simondium church, as he speaks of the fine estates lying each side of the road near it, and "leading to the Berg River and from thence to the wagon makers valley," on which, near the church, was a sort of market for the poor people from a distance, who



A QUAIN GABLE IN PAARL.

could there provide themselves with groceries and domestic wares when they came in for service. The mill and the church were the two centres of the district in his day ; and Paarl still owns the largest water-mill for many a mile around.

Sparrman, visiting Paarl in 1792, arrived in the afternoon at the miller's house. He was taking a nap, and on waking, set before the naturalist an old crazy chair, and without asking who he was,

## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

said directly, "Wat zal ye bruiken." Sparrman said that he was hungry and thirsty too. "What ! have you eaten nothing to-day ?" cried the miller. "Girl, bring some meat, and bread, and a bottle of wine," and he relapsed into silence while Sparrman ate, "poring over an astrological almanack" of the seventeenth century. A little further on lived a sexton, "a set of people" says the naturalist, "more respected with the Calvinists than with us." He was of "black extraction on the mother's side." Sparrman went in and drank with him "a dish of miserable tea without sugar." The church did not impress him favourably. "By this edifice," says he, "I could perceive that the boors bestowed no more pains on God's house than their own," which is ungrateful of him, as elsewhere he mentions the handsome houses. "The church was indeed as big as one of our largest sized hay barns, and neatly covered as are the other houses, with dark coloured reeds, but without arching or ceiling, so that the transoms and beams within made a miserable appearance. There were benches on the sides for the men, but the women have each of them their chair or stool in the aisle." These chairs involved a good deal of etiquette. A young girl would be placed at the back of the church, and as her elders died, married, or moved away, her seat came forward, until in her old age she would find herself under the pulpit, in the front row. Certain old Colonial families still possess these

## OLD CAPE COLONY

chairs as heirlooms. In eighteenth century Cape Town they once gave rise to a pretty quarrel. Van Noot, afterwards the so-called "wicked Governor," was on a visit to Table Bay as Inspector-General



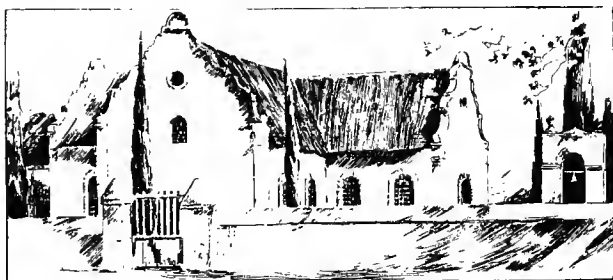
OLD COLONIAL CHAIR ONCE IN PAARL CHURCH.

of Fortifications. His wife was given the front seat in church. But Madam Cranendonk, wife of the Chief Merchant, strongly objected to taking the less prominent position. Her husband the Secunde spoke of the dignity of his appointment. Van Noot protested he

## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

did not care a button where his wife was placed. The quarrel was duly reported to the Company's Directors at home, who replied with some exasperation that they could not listen to such trivialities.

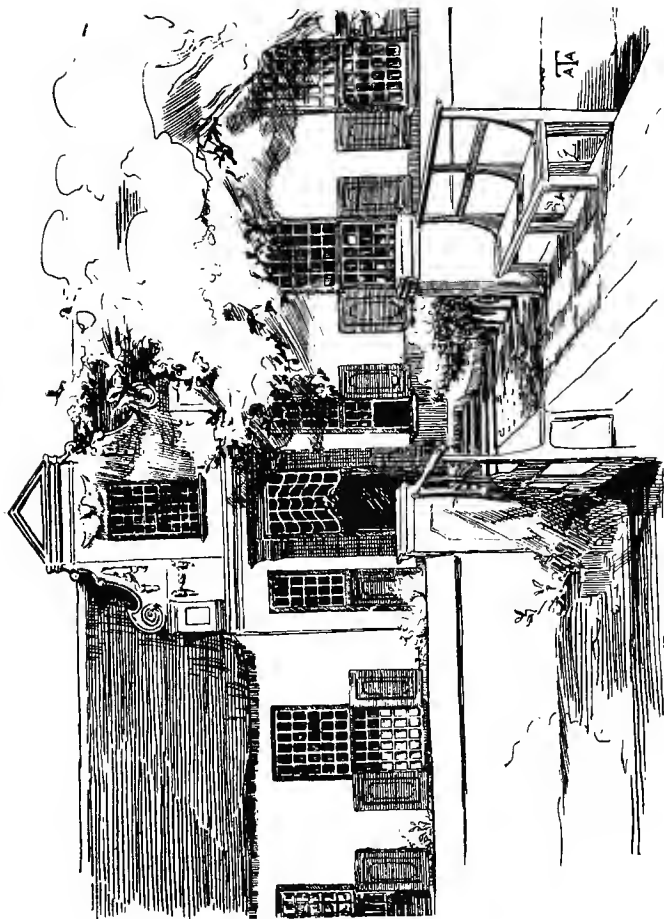
Sparrman set off on foot from Paarl, with eighteen "china oranges" which he had bought for one schelling—Dutch—evidently not much impressed with the place. But John Borrow about thirty-five years later gives a better account of the thirty houses placed apart from each other



PAARL CHURCH.

with gardens and vineyards between, so as to form a street. In the middle stood the church, now called a "neat octagonal building with thatch," and "at the upper end a parsonage with a garden, vineyard and fruit trees."

It says a good deal for the high standard of beauty of the day, that the old parsonage should not have called for greater notice ; for it is a very fine example of the later Colonial style, in which the decorative effect is produced by a mere repeti-



THE PARSONAGE, PAARL.



## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

tion of the large windows without, somehow, an effect of stiffness.

Very few remain untouched of the thirty houses of old Paarl. The town is prosperous, and gabled houses are unfashionable. Yet the heavily timbered street has the charm, and the same curious Colonial anomalies of the European life developed in alien surroundings. The mountain with its shining lump of granite lacks the fine outlines of the wild peaks of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, but at the entrance to Paarl is an avenue of pines noble enough for the approach to any Greek city. Ciccalas shrill under the aromatic branches, brown labourers pass to and fro with baskets of melons and grapes, or a long ox team ploughs through the soft white dust. Surely the Shepherds of Theocritus must sing to their pipes not far off, and old Pan himself, the Pan of the old pagan world, will wander amongst the shadows when the sun goes down.

Almost as soon as you get away inland from Paarl a change comes over the country. I suppose one of the first things which strikes a new-comer at the Cape is the silence of the wind-swept veld, which shows hardly a sign of human or animal life though it may be within an hour of modern civilization and close to squalor and over-crowding. Near to the houses and around the green centres of the farms you will find bird life in plenty: swallows, coming, some have thought, by way of

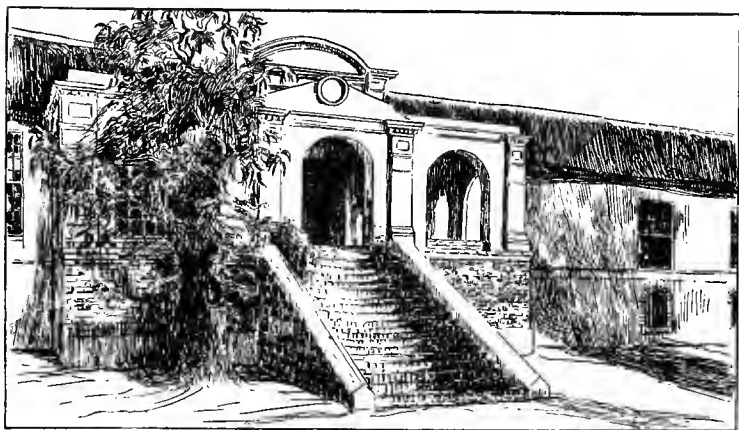
## OLD CAPE COLONY

Egypt from Europe ; little " white eyes " greenish in colour, with white circles round each eye ; grey finks, building most often in the trees nearest to the homestead itself. Above all the bold butcher bird with his black and white plumage ; so bold that once, lying very quietly on a mountain slope behind Frenchhoek, one perched on me for some time. A wicked little creature, whose throaty imitations of other singing birds in some extraordinary way fascinates them ; caged pets creep nearer and nearer to the bars to listen to the treacherous allurements, until the sharp beak pierces their brains. But away from houses, from river beds, you may dream for an hour among the heather and aromatic undergrowth, and save for the busy little beetles rolling their balls of dust, and the husks of invisible life, such as a shed snake-skin, a porcupine quill, you will see no living creature, and hear no bird but the melancholy call, as it swoops and soars, of the South African lark.

Further afield maybe, the contrast is less marked ; for there are fewer houses, fewer trees, and the undergrowth and protea is replaced by karoo bush and milky-stemmed plants of an arid sandy soil. But unless in some mountain ravine you come on a myriad joyous green canaries, whose shrill happiness is more fascinating than can be described, or see in some favoured spot a long-tailed " honey bird," signs of life are even rarer, the silence almost more profound.

## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

Few people now use the Roodezand pass over which the old settlers crossed the Ubiqua mountains to the Land of Waveren; but the later one of the New Kloof, where, wrote Borrow in 1804, baboons screamed at him from the rocks. At the foot of the Roodezand was once a Company's station, and there is still a Drosdty or Magistrates' Court. It is not particularly ancient,

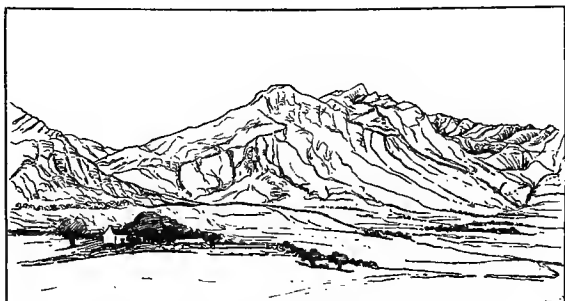


THE DROSDTY, TULBAGH.

having been built after the first English occupation, during the short rule of Commissioner de Mist. Yet as it stands there dignified and desolate, the blue mountains showing, as in an old Italian picture, through its brick arches, the place might belong to any age. Clinging to it is that strange desolation which lies round some places human

## OLD CAPE COLONY

beings have made their own, a thousand times more desolate than the wildest desert spot. Beneath the halls within, now partitioned into dwelling rooms by wooden screens, are prison dungeons ; and farmers digging near by have uncovered skeletons of chained prisoners or convicts ; though indeed the practice of burying in fetters was condemned on the score of economy by the Dutch Company, as you may see in the dispatches. It is



ROOOEZAND PASS, TULBAGH VALLEY.

an eerie place ; the wind was hot that blew over the mountain pass, carrying little eddies of dust and sand up the wide steps, but it made me shudder. What sinister thing had happened at that beautiful mountain station, that the straggling little town of Tulbagh, three miles off, should seem a haven of refuge ?

A wide plain, outlined by barren mountains exquisite in form and colour ; dusty roads, sparse clumps of trees : this is Tulbagh district for the

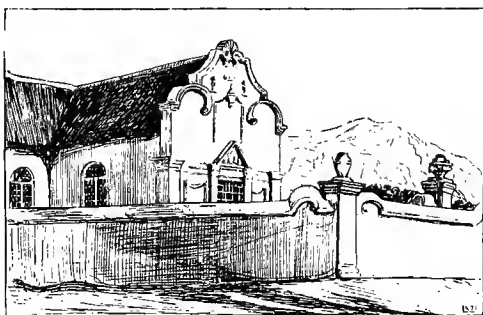
## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

greater part of the year. Yet in early spring the unpromising-looking veld is covered by sweet grass, and ixias and wax-like heaths star the country round. To this, the old Land of Waveren, did Governor Willem van der Stel in 1699 draft parties of farmers from Drakenstein. The place he named after a "great family to which he was allied," says Captain Hop ; probably either that of Johan Hudde, Heer van Waveren, Director of the East India Company, or one of the family of Bors of Wavèron, to whom, together with the High Sheriff Hinlopen and Willem Six, burgomaster of Amsterdam (Governor Willem van der Stel's two grandfathers), Commelin's book of the *Old Buildings of Amsterdam* is dedicated. He desired, wrote Governor van der Stel to the Directors, to form a new settlement which should grow by the prosperity of its own people. "Who will not do," continued he, "as the majority of those who come out, who, when they have scraped together something, then depart, which as your Honours will be able to perceive tends to the great injury of this growing Colony."

Tulbagh Church, dated 1795, is interesting within its encircling wall, standing forlornly enough when I saw it, with windows broken and out of repair, whilst opposite a spick-and-span edifice stared triumphantly at the disarray of its predecessor. Its real beauty lies in the curved lines of the gateway, set against the wild loneliness of

## OLD CAPE COLONY

mountain and open country. I can imagine that to the pioneers gathered for prayer, this little oasis, beautiful in its way, must have worked unconsciously into their Sunday restfulness: a haven of peace in a desert place. John Borrow, in 1806, practical and commonplace, calls it a "small neat church and parsonage" (the latter has very graceful gables) and says that near the



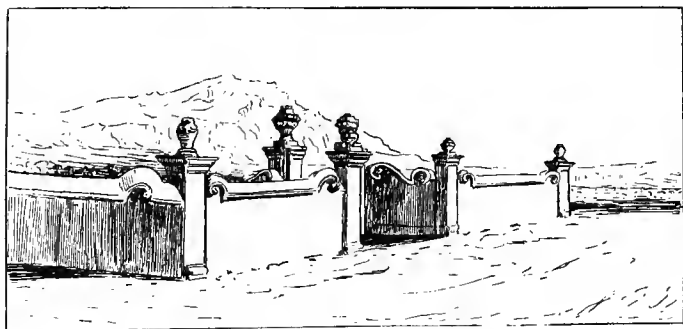
OLD CHURCH, TULBAGH.

church was a "row of houses," the number of which had "lately been increased."

The elders of the old church were Jacobus du Pré, Gerrit van der Merwe and Jacobus Théron. Wandering forty or fifty miles farther in the steps of the pioneers, to the higher plateaux beyond Waveren, you come to a charming little house, which carries on its gable the initials of the Thérons and van der Merwes combined in a monogram. The name of the place is Leeuwfontein, for here the

## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

last lion of the district was killed not so many years ago whilst drinking at the cool stream of the ravine below. The farm is set under the bare mountains of the Warm Bokkeveld; attractive enough with its large cool hall and old cane-seated furniture, with a great fire-place and chimney which one looked at, somehow, as a curiosity, because it was treated as such by the kind people of the place. Go on, if you are there, up the steep



WALLS OF THE CHURCHYARD, TULBAGH.

pass and over the mountain. Wild and lonely enough; here and there an ostrich taking a dust bath in the road as you descend on the further side, or a tiny "Winkle" or shop (in one of these I found a solitary Jewish store-keeper faithfully holding the Passover; his Bible and phylacteries spread on the table of the room where he hospitably entertained the passing stranger). In the plain beyond stand the two great headlands which

## OLD CAPE COLONY

terminate the mountain range ; they form a kind of door which lead to the blue mysterious karoo, and seen as I saw them, standing black against a sunset sky, the vague ocean-like distance already growing dim, they had, I know not why, an



LEEUFONTEIN.

intensely tragic air, as of leading from an old worn-out world into a new future full of unknown dangers and possibilities. This also is Old Cape Colony, for it is the early road to the Kimberley diamond mines, and through the "Poort" once



## PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND

eagerly hastenèd a stream of speculators and miners : men in wagons, carts and coaches ; men wheeling their worldly goods in handbarrows, all with the eternal desire of gold in their eyes. Hard sand, covered with sparse rhenoster plants, lies between the contorted mountains ; in summer there will be hardly another plant except the succulent " milk bush " ; and after a drought the melancholy of the landscape is intensified by enfeebled cattle and mules lying here and there by the wayside unable to move. So far from modern touch is it, that in 1898 no bicycles had ever been seen, long mule teams shied all over the veld at their appearance, and one charming little fair-haired child asked if they were used as punishments for evil conduct.

Whether you come to hospitality and fine courtesy at the farms, or to reticence, suspicion or sullenness, is a matter of chance ; help, if you are in need of it, you are sure to find. The country may move your imagination strongly, holding as it does something of the sun-dried fascination of the East ; or the desolation may overwhelm you, so that you return with a thankful spirit thirty miles or so back to the simple civilization of the township of Ceres. For Ceres has wide shady streets threaded by watercourses, and on the stoep of the Inn do the wool dealers of the district congregate, discussing business, politics, and their neighbours. Here in summer-time many visitors



CERES BRIDGE.

PAARL, TULBAGH, CERES AND BEYOND  
arrive ; laden carts toiling up “ Mitchell’s Pass ”  
from the railway station in Tulbagh plain below,  
and over the wooden bridge that spans the mountain  
stream. Amongst the rocks of Mitchell’s  
Pass are some of the Hottentot paintings, perhaps  
the oldest work of man in Cape Colony.



## MONEY, SHIPS, AND CHINA



## IX

### Money, Ships, and China

NOTHING is more strange than the absolute disappearance of things—their apparent annihilation ; for if you reflect on it, the words “lost ” and “disappeared ” have a very limited meaning. Practically not a bit of the old Dutch Company’s money is found at the Cape. Copper “Company’s coins” are to be bought by the handful in bazaars of the coast towns of India, and are sold as scrap metal in Ceylon ; but at Cape Town, though no doubt individuals may own a coin or two, not even in the Museum or the Archive Office is there a specimen of those, or of the more valuable gold coins sent from Holland. A few of the Company’s stations had the right of coinage. The ducatoon was principally put in circulation at Batavia, and was given an artificial value of thirteen escalins (or schillingen of six sous) instead of the usual value of ten and a half ; thus the Company made a profit of two and a half escalins or fifteen sous on each ducatoon. Of the copper money, eighty stuivers went to a ducatoon and

## OLD CAPE COLONY

forty-eight or fifty to a rix dollar. Two rix dollars went to a ducaat. The gold double ducaat was sent from Holland; these were the "Dutch Dubbeltjees" which the Company's men made such heroic efforts to save in the many wrecks of the Cape of Storms. Coinage of the East India Company bore the crowned lion of Holland, and on the obverse the V.O.C.: Vereenigde Oost-indische Compagnie (United East India Company) monogram of the Dutch Company. It is easy enough to detect the difference between those minted at home and in the Indies.

In the early days "reals" seem to have been in use at Table Bay. For instance, in 1659 no one might pass through the pega-pega hedge of the Company's garden, and the penalty for breaking the law was three years' hard labour in chains, with a fine of a hundred reals. Later, guilders were in use, two and a half Dutch gulden were equal to a rix dollar. In addition to other disabilities, the coinage of the settlements was liable to be changed by the Company. In 1706 an order came from Batavia to the Cape to deal no longer in guilders and stuivers but in rix dollars and "eights," and the price of goods had to be readjusted to meet the alteration. The reward for each lion killed was then fixed at eight rix dollars. I find that Haazendal farm was sold by Haazenwinkel in 1728 to two burghers, Christiaan Rasp and Jacob van Bochem, for







STUIVER PIECE COINED BY THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY.



GOLD DOUBLE DUCAAT.



TWO-STUIVER PIECE COINED IN THE EAST BY THE  
DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY.

## MONEY, SHIPS, AND CHINA

12,050 "even" Cape guilders or sixpences, of which 2,410 sixpences were paid in cash and a mortgage given for the rest. Under Ryk Talbough, in 1762, the same farm was sold to burgher van As for 13,500 guilders, and in 1831 the father of the present owner bought it for £1,150 or 46,000 guilders. Dollars and guilders were used until well into the nineteenth century, and a French Hoek friend of mine, recalling the old slave sales, remembered his father having paid 200 rix dollars each for two special men about the year 1830.

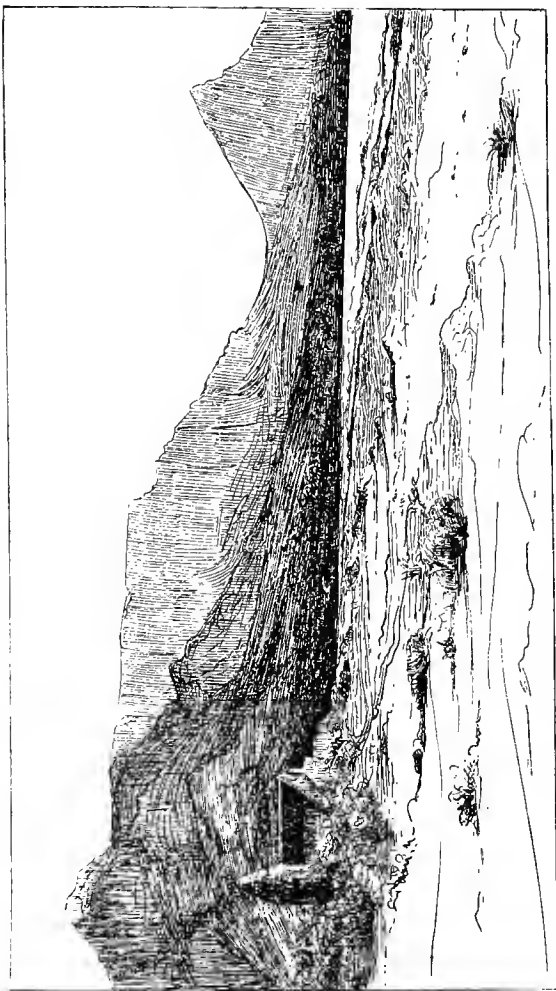
Rate of exchange seems to have varied from time to time. "The silver ducatoon which goes in India for eighty stuivers," wrote Admiral Stavorinus in 1798, "is only current here for eighty-two rupees, whether of Batavia, Surat or Bengal, ninety for twenty-four stuivers. Coins of Holland have the same currency as at home, except Zeeland rix-dollars, which are only worth fifty stuivers. Sest halves (pieces of five and a half stuivers) go for schillings (pieces of six stuivers). As in Batavia accounts are kept here in rix-dollars of forty-eight stuivers. At public sales prices are taken in Cape guilders of sixteen stuivers each."

How much of this old money is buried in the tons of silting sand at Salt River, who shall say? Almost the worst misfortunes of the early days at Table Bay were the terrible shipping disasters of the unsheltered haven. In the tremendous

## OLD CAPE COLONY

winter gales the vessels at the roadstead dragged their anchors, and were driven on the rocks or beaten to pieces in the pitiless breakers of the long sandy stretch beyond the Castle. An evil place to look at, sad and sinister, calling up only too easily the disasters of the past. Of all the shining treasure heaps under the sea, Good Hope has her share. The breakers must still wash up from their oozy bed many a golden piece. Diamonds from the East, once tied in the "little packets" of the despatches, ebb too and fro, worthless as the most worthless pebble of the shore. Here went down cargoes of tea and china, silk and linen, teak, ebony and sandal wood, rice and opium and ambergris, and all the spices, the mace, the cloves, the nutmegs, the pepper, which play such a singular, such an almost deadly part; when you think of the lives lost in procuring them, and the old story of trade.

In 1697, in the stormy month of June, three big ships found their doom in Table Bay. The *Swarte Leeuw* was smashed in front of the Company's wharf, the *Oosterland* and the *Waddinxveen* broken at Salt River; the cargo scattered and only sixteen saved out of all the crew. In this terrible time the Governor, the Secunde Elsevier, Olof Bergh, Captain of the Garrison, with officers, soldiers and slaves, were busy day and night "even with lanterns in rain and wind, diligently and zealously." "Often," says the despatch,



THE SHORE THAT HAS SEEN SO MANY WRECKS.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

“ the Governor stood up to his knees in water to keep things going, and continually had boats afloat in order to despatch cables and anchors to the return fleet which . . . were in such great danger.” The crew of the three ships were unrecognizable when found, and the money chests and two small bags of diamonds, tied round him by the steward at the last moment—one of those terrible moments of heroism, so futile and pathetic,—were all irretrievably dispersed.

At Robben Island the *Dageraad* was lost with all the money she carried. The broken chests were washed ashore, but the money is still beneath the surf, which hides its treasure for evermore. Then there was the *Craijensteen* with her consignment of money ; a large ship which drifted on to the rocks between Hout Bay and the Lion’s Kloof in a thick mist at the “ third glass of the dog watch.” And often a mist still hangs about this foaming sea, where the cold Atlantic dashes into spume and spray, as it rolls in from distant Antarctic ice-floes.

Above, between the rocks and the craggy sides of Table Mountain winds the wide Victoria Road. To drive round it is one of the easiest and most beautiful expeditions. Go on a clear morning in the early spring of the Cape. The slopes are jewelled by thousands of flowers ; the lizards, grey “ Kokelmannetje,” the little cooking man, and the blue blinking Agora, have hardly yet crept

## MONEY, SHIPS, AND CHINA

out to bask in the sun. The twelve grey crags, called the Apostles, rear their heads into a pale cloudless sky.

Yet with all its peaceful beauty it is not difficult to imagine down by these rocks the great ship with its twisted masts and spars, and to hear the cries of the sailors as the wreck was whirled round and round in the boiling sea and finally thrown slanting with its bows on the rocks, stern under water. Fiscal Blesius and Secunde Elsevier were at the place as soon as the news reached headquarters, but the saloon was submerged; three of the money chests and most of the cargo lost. The Governor found the track almost impassable and inaccessible both by foot and on horseback; and seems to have contented himself by writing voluminous letters addressed "To the Commissioners watching the *Craijensteen* behind the Kloof of the Lion"; but the men were saved, and returned exhausted but with sixteen cases of the treasure.

That the service of the Honourable Company was attended with risks none knew better than the van der Stels. Perhaps it was because so many men he knew and cared for were in its employ, that old Simon took infinite pains to improve their case. He not only replaced the old hospital along the unhealthy beach by the new one near the Company's garden, but wrote long letters explaining that want of food and clothing caused much of

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the mortality. "They lose heart through want of nourishment," he says, "and all germs of strength failing them, they die." They did indeed die in appalling numbers, and war could have had few terrors for men whose daily life was carried on under such fearful conditions. One fleet of ten ships came in with two hundred and twenty-eight dead and six hundred and seventy-eight sick and very miserable persons. An English fleet arrived with one hundred and twenty-one dead and one hundred and eighteen sick, the commander himself so ill and lame that he had to be carried ashore to lodge at the house of the Chief Merchant. Simon recommended for use aboard and as a remedy for illness, a meal of barley, plums, raisins and currants boiled, with "a good dash of rum, or some Spanish wine."

The old Governor himself had a son, Cornelis, who set sail on the *Ridderschap* and never returned. A frigate was sent in 1666 to inquire for the missing ship and to get slaves at Madagascar. It returned with a hundred and nineteen slaves, "dearer than they were formerly," but with no news of Cornelis van der Stel. Two years afterwards a small slave boy, bought at the Cape off *The Swift*, a suspicious enough English ship which "bristled with Lion dollars and Mexican dollars," and was going from Madagascar to New York with slaves, gave an account of a large three-master thrown ashore at Amosse, on which



## MONEY, SHIPS, AND CHINA

he saw two persons answering to the missing Cornelis and his little slave Damon. But the commander had no means of sending to the rescue, and when at last he was able to put off a search party, it returned, with a large number of slaves indeed, but without news of the wrecked vessel.

Many a good gold piece lies in Saldanah Bay. In 1702 a great ship, the *Merestein*, loaded with money, was dashed to bits in fourteen fathoms of water off Jutten Island, trying to make the Bay. Commissioners went out with the mate; carefully examined the place and meditated on means to recover the chests, they found it would be impossible because of the surf, equally violent whether the wind blew or there was a dead calm. But one of the most terrible shipping tragedies at Good Hope was some years later in 1722, on May 16, when "the sea," says the journal, "was running mountains high." All the vessels in the Bay parted anchor, and one after the other drifted on the rocks and sand between the jetty of the Castle and the mouth of Salt River. Morning light showed the shore strewn with dead sailors; over six hundred men, English and Dutch, had perished. An opening called Rogge Bay was then completely filled up and obliterated by sand. Again, in 1728, was a repetition of the disaster; this time in the Governorship of Gysbert van Noot. A heavy north wind had risen, on the evening of July 1, and the next day at one in the afternoon

## OLD CAPE COLONY

the ships began to drift. At three o'clock one vessel, the *Haarlem*, had stranded near the Castle, a second had struck, a third had drifted towards Salt River. "Then," says the journal, "a red flag was hoisted on the tower of the Castle, and the bell was rung three times to collect all the Company's servants and the burghers under their officers, in order to give orders under these mournful circumstances. All came together, but as nothing remained for the burghers to do they were allowed to retire, and the military took possession of the beach to prevent theft and disorder." Apparently no effort at all was made to save the men; perhaps in those terrific breakers help would have been impossible. Yet there is something horrible in the cynical account, for in the morning a gallows was erected on the beach on which to hang any one who should touch the cargo washed up, and "when all was safe" the Governor appeared on the spot to give orders about the Company's goods. Carried ashore with the bodies of the seventy-five sailors who manned the ill-fated *Middenoak* were pieces of the money chests in which "Dutch dubbeltjees" were jammed and twisted. The rest lie buried in the sand. A story not unlike this we find in a traveller's account of fifty years later; then, too, the Company's officials cared only for the cargo, and the half-drowned sailors were not allowed to use the clothing washed ashore.

It is strange that Simon's Bay was not thought

## MONEY, SHIPS, AND CHINA

of sooner by the authorities as a winter anchorage. The English pirate ship, the *Great Alexander*, with sixty men and twenty-six guns (she was sighted by burgher Russouw living at Zwaanswyk in the Steenberg), could have told them better. Earlier than this Peter Dunn, the captain, had said he found a sounder anchorage in Bay Falso than in Table Bay. But the place was unused for many years later, and the stone pier from which anchors and cables could be conveyed to ships in danger of parting was not put up at Table Bay in 1831, under Sir Lowry Cole.

Fragile and dainty is the only part of the wrecked cargo that comes down to us. China, blue and white cups and flowered dishes, dredged up from the bottom of the sea. Table Bay has yielded lumps embedded in barnacles, hardened sand, and shelly concretion ; together with pieces fresh and new looking. From Saldanah Bay quantities of egg-shell china have been rescued, probably belonging to the Chien Lung period between 1736 and 1795. Packed in cases which have long since rotted away, the porcelain lies spread on the soft sandy ocean bed, a silent tea party, as it were, laid out for the ghosts of the dead sailors. Many of the tiny cups without handles are absolutely perfect, though they have lain in the wash of the waves for a hundred and fifty years and more. The ships of the Dutch Company had an enormous trade with the Celestials, not

## OLD CAPE COLONY

from China itself, but from islands near, to which their traders carried likely wares.

There is rather an indignant entry in one journal of van der Stel's time to the effect that "no tea and china" have come in the fleet. The household crockery of Good Hope was entirely brought from the East; probably also the metal pots, pans and bowls, for there is a special order for copper bowls from Tutucoryn for use in van der Stel's hospital. In some dusty vineyard far out in the country, you may unearth great pieces of beautiful blue and white porcelain, hidden there as likely as not after some eighteenth century domestic smash by a frightened slave. We know from the indentures of 1798 how much of this fine stuff was regularly imported. Sent yearly from the East for ordinary use were eighteen thousand five hundred dishes, twenty thousand basins and bowls and twelve thousand cups and saucers. They were all to be of blue and white colour alone. But you can find, too, curious lacquered china, old Chinese figures, and rare jars of pale brown, wonderful in texture and hue. So valuable are these things of art, of restrained beauty of design in a new country, which threatens to become newer and more crude every day, that I think of begging from a more powerful pen than my own a solemn curse to be read over all persons who remove, for payment or otherwise, their neighbours' old china and export it to Europe.

FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED FOR  
FIFTY YEARS.



## X

### From Seventeen Hundred for Fifty Years

**I**N the early part of the eighteenth century only the settlement of Table Bay was termed the "Cape," and was thus distinguished from the outlying farms. Waveren (Tulbagh) had not a Landdrost and Heemrade (magistrate and farm council), but was included in the colony of Stellenbosch, of which Drakenstein and Frenchhoek formed a sub-division. A great deal of discussion arose as to the right way of enlarging the town at the Cape, as the burghers wisely thought that a fixed plan should be made. "Should the town be along the watering place parallel with the shore, or towards the Company's garden?" They decided that the town was to spread on the upper slopes, which were healthier than the shore and better provided with water. The plein (parade) was to be left open from the house of Fiscal Blesius, which faced the parade, "to that of the burgher David Heufke," and a town house was to be built on the site of the old

## OLD CAPE COLONY

watch-house, the freehold of which had belonged to the exiled Elzevir. The two houses of Huising and Blesius joined each other. Just possibly they were the two very high stoeped houses at the bottom of Strand Street.

In 1714, five years later than these decisions of the Governor and Council, the traveller Valentyn counted 254 houses, small and large, in the town; many more than he had seen on his first visit to the Cape in 1685, when the remains of van Riebeeck's old fort were being cleared away. Most of the houses now were thatched and very comfortable, with several good rooms. Those with double storeys had two drawing-rooms to the front, several rooms in the middle or back of the house, and a very large yard or court behind. The houses of Fiscal Blesius and Henning Huising were the handsomest in the town, and built with stoeps and gables. Henning by this time was member of the Municipal Council, and one of the richest men at the Cape. Valentyn speaks of "Brommers Row," which faced the Strand where Mr. Brommer, the shipping master, had a "big handsome house with a large stoep," and describes the four large straight streets going towards Table Mountain, and the four cross streets from the Castle, towards the Lion Mountain, which you can still easily trace. Going towards the "Lion's Rump" were pumps from which the ships were watered,



## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

another was "in the Square at the first straight street to Table Mountain" ; a third, from which at the beginning of the nineteenth century slaves used to fetch water for household purposes, was on the way to the Castle. For at these places, says Valentyn, "Mr. Willem Adriaan van der Stel has made ever-springing fountains." I think one of the old pumps is still in existence."

For these building operations bricks were both made at the Cape and sent from Holland, and though people often speak of "Batavian bricks," I cannot find that any were imported. We hear that the Governor-general inspected the potteries and tile factories at Table Bay, and found the work very compact and good, and the tiles better than those of Batavia. According to Valentyn, some of the houses were built of Cape stone, but I never heard of any stone houses, though the quarry on the Steenberg beyond Constantia supplied good stone for flooring, and the pavement of Constantia is said to have come from there. Chinese convicts are spoken of as masons.

Several alterations had become necessary in Simon van der Stel's hospital facing the church. The canal was a source of anxiety, as it was continually being filled up by deposits of sandy soil from the mountain water, and the patients could get across to the canteens. Frogs and crabs undermined the banks, and the water was

## OLD CAPE COLONY

unwholesome. So it was filled in, and the additional space enclosed by a high wall and planted with trees. A gateway was made in the wall opposite the church and another into the Company's garden.

To our ideas this old hospital of Van der Stel which occupied all the upper part of what is now the west side of Adderley Street, and was the most important building next to the Castle, was altogether fearful. But the report says that the 225 patients, all Europeans, were fairly well provided with necessities, better than had been expected; excepting that some had no pillows, and that ten or twelve were lying on mats or pieces of sail instead of beds. "A lantern was to be slung with a lighted match in a central place where the sick could light their pipes, in order that they should not run to and fro or have fires made with bushes." A later traveller describes it as a building of some magnificence with its large glazed windows and four wings, at each corner of which were four little houses each with a "terrace"—perhaps meaning a flat roof. The patients, poor folk, were then looked after by eight or ten slaves who came on in relays, brought food and drink to those who were too weak to move, and told the "father of the hospital" when any one was worse or had died.

For about twenty-two years after Willem Adriaan van der Stel's exile, the colonies of the

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

Cape were at a standstill. The settlers were without the hopes and excitements of the pioneers, and the burghers had enough to do to pay their taxes and to buy the necessities of life. For, "the duty of the officials," wrote Commissioner d'Ableing, was "to add to the Company's profits." These profits resulted principally from the sale



SUNDIAL IN THE COMPANY'S GARDEN.

of imports. He trusted so to arrange and regulate the sale of goods that the Company should secure even greater profits, and wrote to the Landdrost of Stellenbosch, telling him cynically that the Company had a great quantity of unsaleable tobacco on hand, for which he was

## OLD CAPE COLONY

to induce the burghers to exchange their wheat. It was proposed to further increase the revenue by the simple expedient of buying up all the grain and selling it to the bakers and the licensed victuallers at a profit. Severe laws were made against wine smuggling. Offenders were to pay 300 rix dollars, or in default to be flogged and serve for three months as convicts without distinction of person. Wine farmers and other producers of the Cape district from the hill of the "so called Roodebloem at a quarter of an hour behind the Castle and the Salt River, to the Witteboom in the direction of Hout Bay and its surroundings," were forbidden to sell wine, brandy or liquor in any quantity whatever, and it was thought to turn the surplus wine into vinegar for the ships.

A petition signed amongst others by Henning Huising protested that hitherto they had "never been asked to pay tithes on their seed-corn, and bread, and that if as it appears this is now demanded of them, they will be totally ruined the more so that they have to bring everything to the Castle in their own wagons." The Directors were advised that if they put a tithe on peas and beans, the colonists would give up planting them. To its discredit the Company had always carried on a trade with the natives in "dagga," the wild hemp still used for smoking, with such terrible stupefying and intoxicating results on

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

the smoker. We note that the meat contract, which had fallen through in 1705 and been divided by Willem Adriaan amongst four butchers, had been renewed in favour of Henning Huising.

There was little incentive amongst the officials to improve or beautify their surroundings. The new regulations made any ambition of this sort impossible. From the time of the van der Stel exile, the Company's servants from the highest to the lowest, were ordered to get rid of any land



COMMON SEAL OF THE VEREENIGDE OOST-INDISCHE COMPAGNIE  
(United East India Company).

they might possess by selling or otherwise, on pain of forfeiture should the order be disobeyed. No Company's officer was any longer to hire, own, or occupy as proprietor any piece of land. They were to do no trade in corn, cattle, or wine. They were to remain satisfied with their pay. There is a certain smack of Socialism about this, and in the order that even amongst the burghers equality was to be obtained, as far as possible, by forbidding those who had "sufficient amount of land" from buying more from

## OLD CAPE COLONY

their neighbours. Who was to decide the regulation amount I do not know.

Want of timber again became a serious difficulty, and how to obtain a supply so puzzling a question that at one meeting of Council every one was invited to write on paper what he considered the best course to pursue. Van der Stel's unpopular regulations as to tree planting on the farms were kept up as far as possible. But even when the farms were granted free, on conditions that timber was planted and preserved, the men were unwilling to abide by the terms, and excused themselves by saying that the branches of the trees harboured birds, and that the birds ate the grain. Van Assenburgh revived at Stellenbosch the placat by which tree injurers were flogged. Landdrosts were ordered to visit all farms and choose suitable places for tree planting; shoemakers who denuded the undergrowth for their tanning were severely cautioned. In 1708, the year after the Van der Stel exile, the new Governor sent a galiot to Natal and Rio de la Goa for timber. "We are specially urged to do this," he wrote, "by the great want of timber in which we find ourselves, so that if we do not get a good supply from home, things will look very bad."

For some reason the Governor and Council grew weary of the so called "astronomer" Kolbe, and wrote about this time to the Directors that he

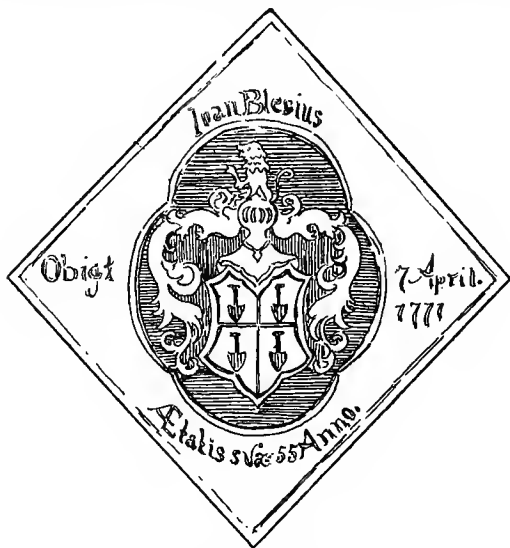
## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

did not perform any burgher service and must be either taxed as a colonist or sent home. The two little books by which he justified his stay at the Cape are as full of local colour in their own way as Mr. Pepys' diary, but it is said that he remained at Table Bay and invented his descriptions of the country. We are pleased to hear of the men walking about during a southeaster wind anxiously holding on to their wigs as well as to their hats. His breakfast party at the tea-table of Mr. Ortman is nice reading. There was present his "friend Mr. Rotterdam, a gentleman of 70 years of age, lately come from Batavia"; hearing of some remarkable tides they went down to the shore, and afterwards got out chairs and "sat in such a manner as to have full view of the sea." The "gentleman" was in fact the Jan Rotterdam exiled by Willem van der Stel for insubordination, and the host was probably Notary Nicolas Oortman, who owned part of the Zwaanswyk farm. I suppose Kolbe was sent home, for we hear no more of him; there are, however, cultivated representatives of the name in the colony. Gradually mention of what may be called the "van der Stel set" drops out of the journal. Lieutenant Adriaan van Rheede, son of van Rhreede tot Drakenstein, died in 1708, and was buried with honours. In 1711 old Fiscal Johan Blesius died, and Governor Simon was present

## OLD CAPE COLONY

at his funeral. There is in the Cape Archive office the small hatchment of a Joan Blesius, who must be his grandson.

Here and there is a mention of Governor Simon, still living at Constantia. The Governor-General



COAT OF ARMS OF JOAN BLESIOUS.

van Hoorn, at the Cape in 1711, with his wife and daughter, paid him a visit of several days, driving, we may be sure, by the old track past van Riebeeck's farm of Boscheuval, thought "the most beautiful place in the Colony," which they went to see another day. We have a graphic account in the journal of van Hoorn's departure,



## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

starting from the jetty amidst salutes from the Castle, and volleys fired by the burghers, while the ladies of the Cape gathered on the beach in their carriages to watch the fleet sweep out of the Bay.

A beautiful sight must these ships have been, carrying great lanterns above their heavily carved sterns, flying their pennons, saluting, as they passed it, the Company's flag on the Castle. Boom! go the guns in a parting farewell. Thin puffs of smoke and spreading sails, already swelled by the wind, show brightly against the clear blue of the sea and sky. Quietly, with a certain solemnity in its state, the fleet moves off from the hospitable shore; are not her dangers from fire and sword, shoal and sickness, so great that each voyage is achieved with a certain astonishment, and a thankfulness of heart most touching and beautiful. The great bodies of her ships, full of men and costly merchandise, grow small, far off, distinct in the southern atmosphere, and the horizon closes over them. You and I, ploughing along the tropic seas on one of the great liners, may well cast back our minds to the days of the old Company, and earlier. Threshing through the phosphorescent waves, we would have heard, instead of the melancholy, reassuring "All's well" of the night watch, the nasal hymn of the leather-jerkined sailors chanting to awaken the sleepers—

## OLD CAPE COLONY

“ Hier zeylen wy met God verheven,  
God wil ons onse Sonden vergeven ;  
Al onse Sonden en misdaed.  
God wil ons goede Schip bewaeren,  
Met alle de lieden daeren vaeren.  
Voor Zee, voor Sand, voor Vyer, en Brand,  
Voor de Helsche, boose, Vyand,  
Voor alle quaed ons God bewaere.

they sang, according to Christopher Schweitzer,  
1675-1683. Done into English it runs thus—

“ Here we sail and God is nigh us,  
God will us our sins forgive ;  
All evil deeds committed by us.  
Our good ship is in His keeping,  
With the men that in her live.  
From sea, from shoal, from fire, and sword,  
From hellish enemy abroad  
And from all ills, preserve us, Lord.”

In 1711 came the sickness and death at Good Hope of the new Governor. A last sinister accusation of having poisoned van Assenburgh was made against old Simon van der Stel, but it does not seem to have met with general belief. Van Assenburgh seems to have been popular, though it is said that he drank. The journal at any rate sings his praises, and talks of the many dinners he gave the officials, and how once he even organized a bull-fight for them in the courtyard of the Castle. In 1712 Simon van der Stel died, lonely enough it may be, at Constantia, seventy-three years old. His property was taken over by Olof Bergh, and with the death

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

of the old Company's soldier its early associations passed away.

New people had been arriving at Table Bay, and new men are mentioned in the journal. A Pierre Cronjé was spoken of in 1708, when he shot two Hottentot women, and was banished for twenty-five years, with half his goods confiscated; and I note that Douw Gerbrantz Steyn is the surveyor of the Steenberg property, for Nicolas Oortmans, when Governor van Assenburgh made out the title deeds of the second grant.

An unusual gloom hung over the colonies after the death of Van Assenburgh and Simon van der Stel. William Helot, once "first clerk" to Governor Simon, was now Secunde, and he became Administrator for the time being; it was he who, finding the punishment of flogging not severe enough to act as a deterrent on the slaves, suggested branding them on the face and neck, a suggestion which was adopted. The summer of 1713 was intensely hot and, though the disease is usually worse during the damp weather of the Cape, small-pox raged at Table Bay and the surrounding country. Of the Europeans, 120 died between the months of April and June, and in the Drakenstein there were hardly twenty people in good health left. Large quantities of slaves died, and there was great mortality amongst the Hottentots; some

## OLD CAPE COLONY

of them flying inland to escape the pestilence, met with a hostile tribe and were exterminated.

The sickness had abated, though people had not yet, says the journal, begun to marry, when at the end of the year 1713 Governor de Chavonnes arrived from the fatherland. He was received with the usual congratulations; moreover, a picnic in a tent of leaves was organized in the Company's gardens; but by the usual fate of picnics, the rain came down and the guests had to adjourn to the Castle. The two sons of Chavonnes, Captain Dominicus Marius and Ensign Peter de Chavonnes, arrived at the same time as their father, and were introduced to the battalion; both were in the Company's service and later were given posts in the Dutch Indies. Soon after a fire broke out at the Leerdam point of the Castle, near the powder magazine, which must have been sufficiently alarming, the courtier-like journalist says, that "though heavy rain was falling the Governor gave such orders that the fire was soon extinguished." In 1715 General de Chavonnes laid the first stone of the Fort or battery on the seaside below the Lion's Rump, called by him Mauritius, but now, I think, usually known as the Chavonnes Battery.

Very little of note is entered in the journal of this period. In 1716 the ships arrived with news of the death of Louis XIV, who had "reigned so many years and by his domineering ways had

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

thrown Europe and our fatherland especially into confusion." In May of the same year we hear that the Christmas ships had not yet arrived. Delayed fleets were a perpetual source of anxiety at Table Bay ; cut off from all other means of information about the outside world, want of news filled them with apprehensions of every kind of disaster, political and to the ships. It was now feared that trouble had arisen with Great Britain.

The condition of the people inland was most deplorable. Cattle were dying in thousands, and the Superintendent of the Schuur, who needed more draught oxen, was ordered to proceed as far inland as possible with an armed escort to barter cattle with the Hottentots. Bushmen in 1719 swept down on the pastures of Hottentots Holland, carrying off the cattle of van der Heyden, who had bought most of Governor Willem Adriaan's estate of Vergelegen ; all over the country the horses were dying. There does not seem to have been a large Company garrison. Five men in the Groene Kloof, seven in the land of Waveren, six at Klapmuts, four on the yacht *d'Amy*, the old English pirate boat annexed by Governor Simon, five on the land boat, and one unemployed, make up the record, besides seventeen workmen and nineteen convicts on Robben Island.

In 1724 Governor de Chavonnes died (they were short-lived men these Company's com-

## OLD CAPE COLONY

manders), and the bells tolled mournfully for him for six weeks. Van Noot, who followed him, died in 1729, suddenly, one afternoon, sitting in his chair. By the ignorant, his end was considered a visitation from heaven, as he had two days earlier sentenced several deserters to punishment and death. The popular story has it that he died the moment he pronounced the sentence, and that his spirit haunts the fine old house now called the Normal College, where tradition says that he lived. In reality, though his sentences were severe, and had several horrible accompaniments, they were not more severe than those of other commanders; neither does he seem to have been more cruel or more wicked than his contemporaries though a certain candid brutality made him in time of shipwreck openly declare for the Company's cargo rather than the drowning men. He is known as the "wicked Governor."

Chief Merchant de la Fontaine was then chosen Administrator, and the Fiscal van Kerval promoted to be Secunde, to the general joy of every one. I note that more slaves seem to have been broken on the wheel and branded and more convicts put to death during the de la Fontaine short administration than in any other, and that the sermons of the two pastors, the Rev. Henricus Bek and the Rev. Franciscus Le Sueur, both names still represented at the Cape, are

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

mentioned with much admiration. The modern mind is badly attuned to these alternating sentences of religion and torture, and the details of the scourgings, brandings, and breaking on the wheel, "without the mercy stroke," and the subsequent offering of the corpse to the fowls of the air, is sickening. After each entry it is usually stated that the "prisoner is to pay all expenses." Confident in his virtue, and his superior position in the scale of humanity, the writer of the journal takes life as he finds it with simple confidence, and after pages of those horrible entries has the courage to end his year book with a devout prayer for temporal prosperity and eternal happiness.

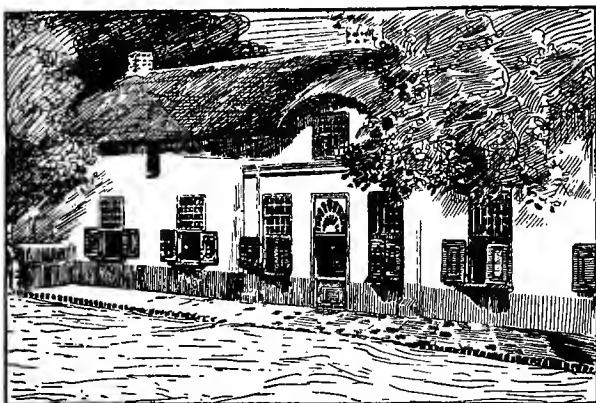
La Fontaine retired in 1736, sailing to Holland in the rather perplexing position of Admiral of a fleet of five ships. After him came Van Kerval, who died in three weeks, and was buried, by his own wish, without pomp or ceremony. Temporarily Daniel van Heugel was appointed, and in 1739, after some wrangling, the *Secunde Swellengrebel* was chosen Governor.

I have not traced much building or many freeholds outside the town to this early half of the seventeenth century, though a few of the undated houses have special characteristics which seem to belong to the period; less ornamental gables but fine fanlight tracery and woodwork.

Whatever may have been the private dramas,

## OLD CAPE COLONY

outside the town, with its fleets, its soldiers and sailors, there was little public excitement, and as far as I can make out, nothing in way of educational progress ; but the life has a fascination for the curious minded. Strange punishments come down to us in the pages of the journal. Of the boat-master, for instance, who



KLASTENBERG, WYNBERG.

had to stand at the church door for three successive Sundays with a board on his breast on which "BLASPHEMER" was written. "Under a Roman Catholic government," remarks the secretary, proud of religious toleration, "he would not have escaped so easily." Names of passing English ships are homelike and interesting, the *Addison*, the *Heathcote*, the *Walpole*, all in the pay of John Company.



## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

In 1737, two years before Swellengrebel's appointment, a little advance was made in the colony, when the well known mission station of Baviaans Kloof—literally Baboon Valley—was formed ; now called Genadendal. The pronunciation of the name is a stumbling-block to a new arrival at the Cape. In 1744 the church of Zwaartland was built in the prosperous if uninteresting corn-growing district now called Malmesbury. In 1740 the district of Swellendam, named after the Governor, was opened up ; many charming houses of the usual gabled type were built, and fine old furniture may still be discovered here and there in the district. But no roads were yet made on to the interior, and even the best track to places so near to Cape Town as Stellenbosch and Hottentots Holland, was only marked by a row of poles stuck in the sand. The fortunes of the Cape as a Company's settlement are sad to contrast with the colonies in America, which, whilst mere infants in years, had possessed printing presses, manufactories, books, schools and colleges. Hand looms and weaving were very early introduced into New England, and a bonus offered on every yard of cotton, woollen and linen cloth ; the beginnings of Harvard College were planned eight years after the arrival of the Massachussetts settlers. At the Cape leather too often took the place of woven stuffs ; and I can only hear of the most

## OLD CAPE COLONY

primitive kind of school. The Company's officers from home must often have experienced the feelings of the journal writer, who entered about 1716: "We live in far distant land and corner of the earth, thousands of miles away from Christian churches and rational beings; where waters lifted as high as the heavens and the very extreme violence of the sea are to be experienced and borne."

Towards the middle of the century a great change was made in the policy of the Company. Her power had declined; foreign ships were no longer kept out of the Bay, though English vessels sometimes caused great indignation by failing to salute, as required, the flag of their "High Mightynesses the Directors." Amongst the various reasons for not doing so the most amusing is that given by the vessel *Marlborough*. She was indignantly boarded by a wharf-master, and told that no one might land until the usual salutes had been fired. On which a subaltern went ashore and explained that they carried an elephant from Madras, and feared to frighten him. The excuse was accepted by the kindly Dutch officials.

Far from discouraging vessels from entering the ports, it was now the interest of the Company, whose profits were steadily diminishing, to induce strangers of all sorts to stay at the Cape; visitors who bought the produce at high rates and were

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

warmly welcomed by the burghers with whom they lodged. Men of every nation jostled each other in the streets, flags of Denmark, Sweden, France and England flew side by side with the V.O.C. monogram of the Netherlands Company,



ZWAANSWIJK, BUILT 1711-17.

and the crowned lion of Holland. Simons Town, used since 1722 as a winter anchorage, became almost as important a haven for the ships as the Cape itself and the society as cosmopolitan. A large hospital, a slaughter-house, and a few small dwelling-houses lay round the bay ; and the house

## OLD CAPE COLONY

for the Resident, who was usually the Secunde, was built ; now altered and improved, it is used as Admiralty House.

Resting places for the sailors, soldiers, travellers and Company's men grew up between the two ports. The old road lay past Boscheuval and below Constantia towards the Steenberg. Here



MORGENSTER, HOTTENTOTS HOLLAND.

was a well known house where refreshment could be sought, the second Zwaanswijk built by Nicolas Oortmans in 1711-1717. Many is the rollicking party that has sung and drunk here in the hall ; the partition screen pushed back and tables set the entire length of the house. They have regulated their watches at the sun-

## FROM SEVENTEEN HUNDRED

dial, dated 1756, which once gave the time to Cape Town, so accurate was it considered. They have scratched their names on the window panes (1763 is a date inscribed there), and have called for supper before setting out on the then rather difficult and dangerous passage across the sands to Simons Town. And here truth compels me to say that the naturalist Sparrman going thither in 1772, was given at the half-way house, either Zwaanswijk or another, only a very "moderate" meal of "stewed beef, red cabbage, meat preserved in pepper, and gritty bread."



THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN  
OCEAN





## XI

### The Tavern of the Indian Ocean

THE last Dutch Governor of the Cape who could in any way be called great, and about whose memory lies a kindly halo of justice and wisdom, was Ryk Tulbagh, who succeeded Swellengrebel on his retirement in 1751. Of him, as of the van der Stels, an impression of strong personality has been handed down to us; gloriously inconsistent stories of his immense love of ceremony and of his rectitude and simplicity of life. He was a Colonial man, and much loved—called, indeed, “father of his people,” although he had introduced the sumptuary laws. These cannot have been popular; they were severe. No one, for instance, of lesser rank than a junior merchant might venture to carry an umbrella at all, and one needed to be a full merchant in order to enter the Castle in fine weather with one’s umbrella open. Everyone had to leave his carriage at the approach of the Governor, and “to get out of the way and allow a convenient passage to the carriage of any of the members of the Court of Policy.” He must doff his hat as he passed the Governor’s house; and as to

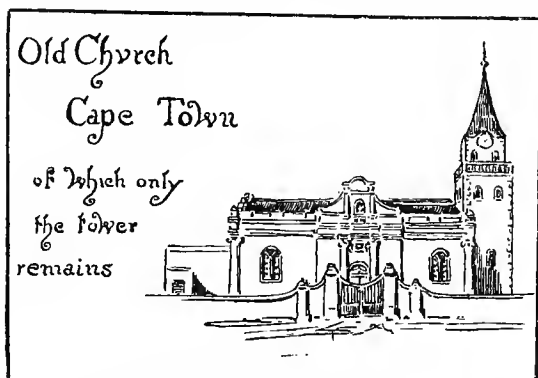
## OLD CAPE COLONY

dress, all women were prohibited, "whether in mourning or out of mourning," under a penalty of twenty-five rix dollars, to wear dresses with a train. Few might wear "diamonds or mantellets"; and though the wives of junior merchants might possess these luxuries, their daughters could not. No women below the wives of the junior merchants might wear silk dresses with silk braiding or embroidery. These sumptuary regulations against "Pracht en Praal" (luxury and ostentation) had been sent out from Holland to restrain, it was hoped, the excesses of Batavia. I do not know how far they were really enforced at Table Bay. No traveller makes any mention of them; and in a climate where the rainfall is so heavy as in winter time at the Cape, one imagines there must in wet weather have been great smuggling of umbrellas. It is said there were still to be seen in the early half of the nineteenth century very low carriages without doors, which had been originally designed for getting out of quickly if the Governor loomed in the distance.

The final shaping and beautifying of Cape Town was now carried out; and the town was beautiful, it seems to me in Tulbagh's times; stuccoed, whitewashed, with green-shuttered windows, behind which prying eyes watched, it is said, to report any infringement of the Company's etiquette. Van Riebeeck's Canal had been partly filled in, and the lower half planted with trees.

## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

It was now called the Herrengracht, and on each side lay large-windowed houses with high stoeps, on which you might have your pipe and coffee, and discuss the latest news of the fleet. Willem Adriaan's church tower was heightened, and a clock was put in it ; it stands there now, the tower of the Dutch Reformed Church ; but the old church has been destroyed. Some of its



CAPE TOWN CHURCH, FROM A PRINT.

walls are incorporated in the present building. During the terrible scourge of small-pox in Ryk Tulbagh's administration, the infection was increased by church burial, and doubtless repairs were necessary, for it is said that a lady and her chair suddenly disappeared in the midst of the service. The pavement had given way, and she was discovered beneath, sitting in the tomb of an early Governor. But what could be more

## OLD CAPE COLONY

interesting now than to have, intact, the hatchments of these early Governors, their monuments, and the tablets and memorials to the captains of the Dutch ships, and of the English and Danish admirals who were buried there, mentioned by Captain Henri Hop in his account of the Cape. Simon van der Stel's monument was destroyed, and though some of the hatchments were afterwards collected by Mr. C. V. Leibbrandt and hung by him in the Archives Office, no doubt many were lost and spoiled. Otherwise all memorials of the men employed by the East India Company and of their wives and children have disappeared. There seems to have been an effort to track out, and repair the tombs which were lost sight of at the reconstruction of the Groote Kerk at Batavia and the monument of van Riebeeck was discovered. In Colombo the English Government in 1813 collected the tombstones from the old graveyard near the Fort and placed them in Wolfendahl Church, saying they viewed with "concern and regret" the neglected state of the consecrated piece of ground. On the Coromandel coast too, where the young children and the wives of the Company's men so often died, their monuments and mural inscriptions have to some extent been cared for. Table Bay Church, with its two handsome doorways of red and white marble, approached by avenues, should have been at least too picturesque to lightly destroy; and is one

## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

of the foolish iconoclasms so difficult to forgive. A great building for the Company's slaves, called the "Loots," was at the wall of the garden, behind the churchyard. Handsome enough, but rather terrible in its arrangements.

The charming Town Hall was begun now, and a Lutheran church and parsonage, built by Martin Melk. Stock has a strange permanency, and this Melk, to whom as you may remember belonged Elsenberg, one of the most beautiful of farm-houses, was the forbear of a family which is still prominent in the Colony and has intermarried with the De Wets. I was told that Madame Melk, widow of a former owner of Elsenberg, was the only lady in the Colony privileged to remain seated when Governor Ryk Tulbagh entered the room, and that his Excellency was wont to visit Elsenberg. "The farm of Melk," says Admiral Stavorinus, "at a distance, and indeed close by, appeared like a whole village. It lies among the mountains, upon the gentle declivity of a high ridge, and on the banks of an ever-running stream which he has led along his farm between two brick walls, like a canal, and which turns a water mill for the purpose of grinding his corn. His dwelling-house, which was of a considerable size, had four or five large and handsome rooms, all furnished in a neat and handsome style, so that it more resembled a gentleman's villa than the mansion of a farmer." It is difficult to know how much of the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

present "mansion" was designed by Melk, and how much by old Sieur Elzevier, who first built it. The gable of course has a late date, and the beautiful side screens of the door were probably made by an Oriental slave, skilled in metal work, specially mentioned by Stavorinus, for whom Melk had paid fifteen hundred rix dollars or upwards of £300. The door was bought by Mr. C. J. Rhodes, burnt with the burning of his earlier house at Groote Schuur, and restored when the present house was built; the present door is a facsimile of the original. Melk was a native of Prussia, and the Dutch Admiral was much impressed by his enthusiasm for his king, so great that the farmer decorated "the chimney pieces and other parts of the house with the arms of his sovereign." I remember finding with surprise an Imperial eagle inlaid in wood above one of the fireplaces.

In accordance with the laws of the Company, only the Dutch reformed religion was allowed; the Lutheran was prohibited. "Mr. Melk," said Governor Tulbagh, "when I pass by that church which is building I shall shut the eye nearest it." "Sir," was the reply, "God Himself will close the eyes of the man who may not look at the building of His house." And, continues the legend, Ryk Tulbagh went home to sicken of the illness which was his last. He died in 1771, speaking on his death-bed of his anxieties for

## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

the Colony and its people, and was the last Governor buried within the old Dutch Reformed Church. In the Lutheran Church there is, as there should be, a mural tablet to Martin Melk. There is too a large quaintly carved pulpit, made



OLD LUTHERAN PARSONAGE.

I believe, by the same artist who designed the pediment on Constantia wine house in 1779.

During all this time no trade or barter could be carried on by any of the settlers or burghers with the natives, and Boers and farmers in outlying places were frequently robbed and murdered

## OLD CAPE COLONY

by the Hottentots without any possibility of retaliating ; any vengeance brought them under the severe penalties prescribed by the Company for those who molested the natives. A resolution under Ryk Tulbagh, couched in his forcible vocabulary prohibited any barter whatsoever ; traders were to be punished by confiscation of property as disturbers of public peace, and to be "arbitrarily punished in the body, aye, even with death." In 1770 for any cattle trade or barter, however trifling, carried on with Hottentots, the offender was to be prosecuted in the most rigorous manner by the landdrosts under pain of losing their office.

At last in 1774, when distant settlers seem to have lived in terror of their lives, the people of the "Groote Middel and Kleyne Roggevelds, and Bokkevelds, Nieuweveld and Hantam," prayed to be delivered from the murderous rapacity of the Bosjesmans Hottentots. The name is a late one, and the "Sonquas" and "Obiquas" of the first explorers probably stand for it. In answer to the petition, an expedition was organized, to be under a newly-appointed Field-commandant Opperman, by the Landdrost and Heemraden and the militia officers of Stellenbosch with the sanction of van Plettenberg and his Council. But the dying out of the Bushmen has been due as much to sickness and the usual decline of a primitive race as to extermination by the farmers.



## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Smallpox raged at the Cape during the time of Ryk Tulbagh, carrying off in 1755 two thousand of the limited population, and again in 1767 about one thousand more. The earliest records mention strange outbreaks of sickness which decimated the native tribes, and we hear once or twice that any infectious disease at Good Hope was carried inland by native tribes.

Rarely, I suppose, has any society been at once so small and so varied as that which Sparrman, the Swedish naturalist, the friend of Linnaeus and of Captain Cook, found at the Cape in 1772. He arrived the year after Tulbagh's death, when the unpopular van Plettenberg was Governor, under whose protection he immediately put himself. Dr. Thunberg, the Upsala botanist, travelling at the expense of some gentleman in Holland, arrived about the same time. The land of the blue and red disa was justly famous; Bougainville the scientific explorer, and La Caille the astronomer, had already been there. Equipped with the eye of an observer, the naturalist gives us a most vivid account of the European medley which succeeded the old Company's Chinese policy of exclusion. When he describes to us the burgher militia, whose blue coats had each faded into a different shade, so varied "that they might as well have been purple and pink, and whose waistcoats were none of them alike," it was "a French priest with red heels to his shoes"

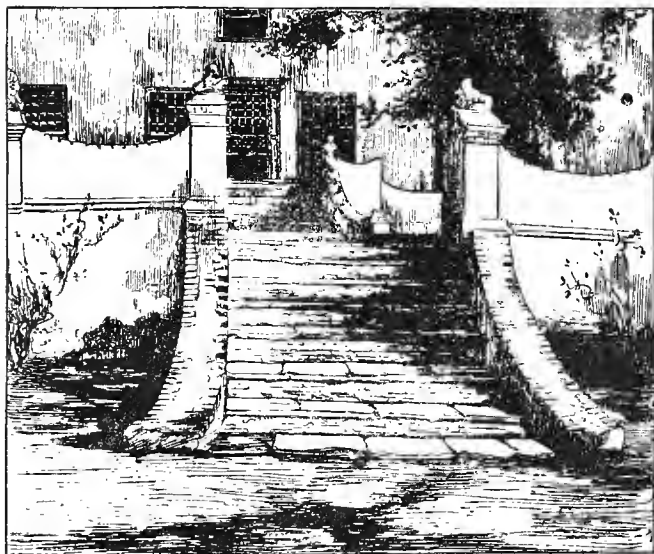
## OLD CAPE COLONY

... who expressed his amazement at the parti-coloured costume. Some of this burgher militia, the Swede tells us, were Europeans who had served in the wars at home, but who, having spent five years in the country, had become naturalized. At one time a feud existed between them and the garrison, and in a moment of exasperation they had shot at each other with metal coat buttons and pieces of money, since when they were obliged to exercise at different times. Much disappointed were all these later travellers with the Company's garden ; in fact, from all accounts it deteriorated soon after the van der Stel exile. Sparrman merely calls it one of the largest gardens in the town, where the greater walks were bordered by oak trees thirty feet high, and the fruit trees were surrounded by hedges of myrtle and elm. At the end of the pleasure garden the Company's menagerie was railed off.

At Simonstown our traveller found lively English ladies on their way to and from India, Danish and French officers and captains and solid Dutch skippers, who, to his great distress, smoked their pipes at dessert, and sat with their hats on and their elbows on the table. Sparrman passed much of his time at the winter anchorage, for Mr. Hemming, the *Secunde*, was in residence there, and the naturalist acted as tutor to his sons. The rest of his time at the Cape was largely spent at Alphen, that beautiful old house between

## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Wynberg and Constantia, where Hemming lived while not at Simonstown. The freehold had first been granted in 1714 to Theunis van Schalkwyk, and again adjoining land by Governor Tulbagh to one Abraham Leever. Leever probably built the house, but it is said to have been restored



STEPS AT ALPHEN, WYNBERG.

or improved by a retired sailor of the Company, Captain de Waal, who placed two funny little portrait busts of himself and his wife at the top of the flight of steps. He is thought to have designed the steps, and to have laid out the garden with mathematical precision.

## OLD CAPE COLONY

Sparrman speaks of a hippopotamus which wandered up in the dusk from the Zeekoe Vlei (hippopotamus pool) on the "Flats," and which he met near Wynberg; of the flamingoes with their snow-white plumage and flaming wings. I do not know how long it is since both beasts and birds have been killed off, or deserted, the place. I have heard a suggestion of making artificial lakes with mechanical pleasure boats at the old hippopotamus haunts on the road to Muizenberg.

Wandering in the country the man had interesting experiences, having himself a friendly and interesting personality. He was delighted with the farmers, "a set of honest, hearty fellows," and found that the occupants of the dwellings, composed "partly of brick and partly of well-wrought clay," as he designates the plaster work, were hospitable and kindly. He stayed at a handsome house of van der Spoi, "brother of the owner of old or red Constantia," on the way to Paarl, where he got an excellent dinner and where his host stood in the doorway as he came up, taking him by the hand and saying "Good-day! Welcome! How are you? Who are you? A glass of wine? A pipe of tobacco? Will you eat anything?" Many times he mentions that the floor of the homesteads was only bare earth, and that the furniture was miserable. Yet on the whole during his long walk "over dry and torrid hills," with the insects he collected

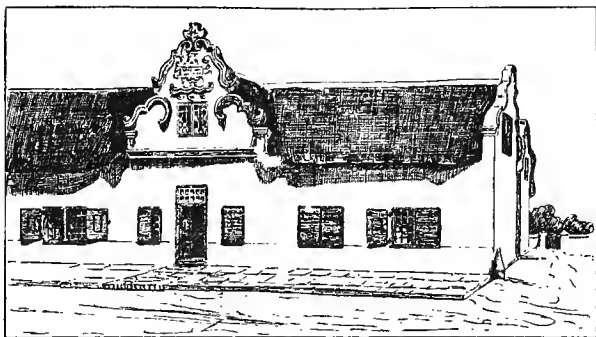
## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

stuck round his hat, to the amazement of his new acquaintances, he was comfortably housed and generously treated. Settlers from Berlin, Hanover, and Livonia he specifies, and several earlier explorers speak of colonists from Hamburg and Cologne ; so there seems to have been a fair sprinkling of Germans, amongst the country folk. Portuguese was the language spoken to, and by, the slaves and the people from Java. Cape "Taal" is still full of eastern words, "Karoo" is thought to have been introduced from the East, "mealies," the ordinary word for Indian corn, to come from the Javanese "mili" or Portuguese "milho" — a thousand — (seeds). "Naartje," the Cape for a sort of Tangarine, probably a corruption of the Persian "narinj" an orange, though it is said to mean a "little fool."

Sparrman describes the Company's servants and soldiers from whom he asked his way, somewhere, it would seem, between Klapmuts and the Bottelary district. They were all drunk with the wine which they carried about in leathern bottles or calabashes. "Every one of them pointed out a different way, jabbering all at once in High Dutch, Low Dutch, and Hanoverian, telling him, in their sea dialect, that if he does not alter his course at once he will meet with deserts, wild mountains, and the like." Hereafter he encountered "a black heathen tending sheep, and in consequence of his sober and sensible

## OLD CAPE COLONY

directions, he arrived by nightfall at the house of a Hanoverian farm bailiff, who welcomed him with a hearty flap of the hand in the South African manner." The place may have been Haazendal in the Bottelary, as a little later Admiral Stavorinus tells us that he stopped there, and that the owner, burgher van As and his wife, received him in very hospitable manner, giving him a dish of tea and a glass of exception-



HAAZENDAL IN THE BOTTELARY.

ally good wine while the horses were baiting. The title deeds of the farms show that a little later again it belonged to the widow of van As, and was taxed 1,200 guilders yearly for the dowager lady of Governor Joachim van Plettenberg. The name, like most of the farm names, comes down from its earliest owner, Haazenwinkel, a beadle and messenger of justice in the

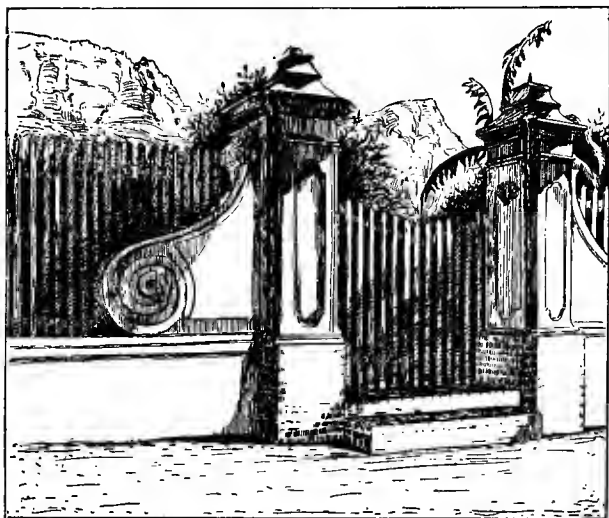
## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

time of Willem van der Stel, who granted him the land in 1704 on condition that for the "great privilege of the right to hold and cultivate it" he would give a tithe of his corn to the government, and replace all wood he might drop down, planting oaks and other timber. There are not many trees now near this charming lonely farm, but whether it is the fault of Haazenwinkel or his successors who shall say ? The date of the gable is quite late, 1790.

According to Sparrman's accounts, eighteenth century Colonial life had certainly grave drawbacks. He was surprised at getting such bad food and so little milk ; the latter fault is still characteristic. When at last, at a " house with a clay floor," he is given milk by the two children who are at home, " Master John and Miss Susy," in the morning his coffee is " full of groats and as weak as small beer." More painful is the sketch of the house with a scolding housewife at which the slave girl drags a log of wood chained to her foot ; the shrieks and cries in another house where the slaves January and February were under the lash. I think no one can recommend slavery after the description of his night in the Bottelary, when he and his host bolt their door and sleep with five loaded guns over their heads, for fear of the slaves ; for he is told they sometimes become furious at night and commit murder. Fugitives besides were continually wandering

## OLD CAPE COLONY

about, stealing to the houses in the dark, and inciting the others. The owners lived in a continual state of anxiety. The naturalist himself had a narrow escape, for returning from Cape Town to Alphen one night he missed his road. Coming to an "elegant house," probably



GATE OF THE SLAVE ENCLOSURE, BOSHOF.

either Boshof, the old home of the Breda family, or to Stellenberg, he was first attacked by dogs ; then a troop of slaves came out, calling to him in broken Malay and Portuguese. Spärrman, terrified at the appearance of the men, and the possibility of being murdered without chance



## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

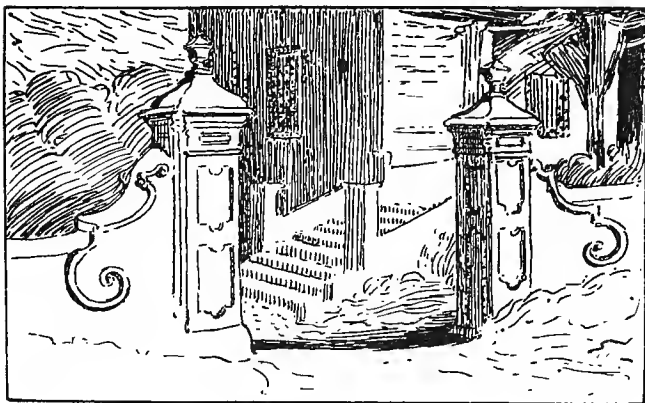
of help—for the master of the house would have been safely locked within—gave rein to his horse, and never stopped until the good animal arrived home, to the surprise of his rider, by some unknown path.

I do not think these stories were exaggerated. In many instances there were delightful friendships between the owner and the slave. It is impossible to doubt the stories of good fellowship and devotion which existed in the time and live in the traditions of the fathers and mothers of people still alive. Has one not seen very old men and women who were once slaves, and many who were the children of slaves, of an Arab, Javanese, or Madagascar stock, who were immeasurably superior to any other coloured type at the Cape, and whose kindness of heart and faithfulness were unparalleled. But in the days when the gallows stood always ready for its prey and the rack was part of the machinery of life, the brutalizing influence must have been extreme. A slave atrocity or revenge is recorded on the coat of arms of the suburb of Mowbray near Cape Town, once called Trikop. There at the old house of Welgelegen, now rebuilt, a whole family was murdered. One baby only, whose descendants are still alive, was saved by his nurse, who hid him in the large brick bread oven. The murderers were caught and killed, their heads exposed in the horrible old fashion. The word “kop,”

## OLD CAPE COLONY

meaning both "cup " and "head," was mistranslated into English whilst the story was forgotten ; and the Mowbray coat now shows three cups as well as three heads.

The most important development of the Cape during those later years was the spread of the Colony in the direction of Colesberg. Here on

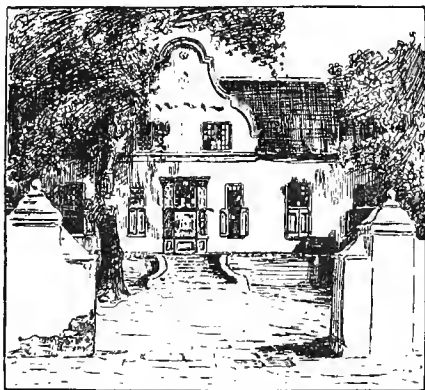


GATE OF WELGELEGEN, MOWBRAY.

the Zeekoe River, Governor van Plettenberg set up a beacon. A second he placed at Plettenberg Bay. About the same time Orange River was named by Colonel Gordon in honour of the House of Orange. Gordon is a mysterious enough figure, perhaps a Jacobite, for he was an old officer of the Scotch regiment who had served in the Netherlands under Colonel Dundas. He had

## THE TAVERN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

certainly cut himself off from his people, for he was in the service of the Dutch Company. He committed suicide after the capitulation of the Cape to England a few years later.



ELSENBERG.



## MEN AND HOUSES



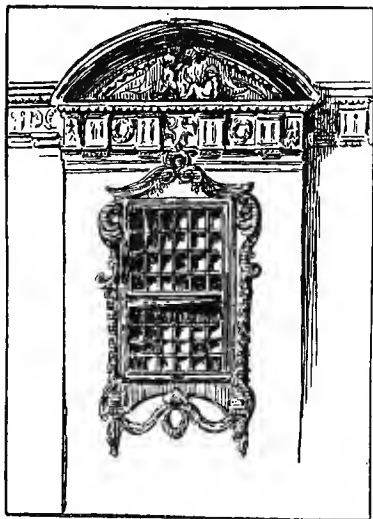
## XII

### Men and Houses

WHEN I look at the neat portrait of Captain Cook, with his satin waistcoat, high stock, and laced coat and hat, I wonder how they lasted during his hairbreadth adventures in all quarters of the globe. I have always thought the clothes of the eighteenth century singularly badly designed for men of action, and am confirmed by Sparrman's account of himself after his stay up country with the old elephant hunter Prinsloo. His hair was braided into a twist, his "side curls" straight and fluttering in the air, and his fine linen coat with a white ground was variegated with dabs of gunpowder and spots of dirt of all kinds. The flaps of the three-cornered hat were hanging loose, his ruffles were torn, his stockings about his heels, and his smart gilt buttons lost on the veld. His friend, Mr. Immelman, was worse, for with a beard five weeks old, he "figured on horseback in a long nightgown, with a white nightcap, and large wide boots; at the time he was without stockings." Even as he was, Sparrman appears to have been very attractive to the

## OLD CAPE COLONY

women, who counselled him to marry and settle amongst them, but in a burst of unusual frivolity the naturalist confesses that much as he liked them for their kindness and virtue—and indeed he admired his hosts exceedingly—their appearance made anything else impossible.



LATE WINDOW IN CAPE TOWN.

"There are few people more obliging to strangers than the Dutch in general at this place," wrote Captain Cook in 1775, when he arrived at Table Bay, having returned with Sparrman from a voyage round Cape Horn. "The good treatment which strangers meet with



## MEN AND HOUSES

at the Cape of Good Hope and the necessity of breathing a little fresh air has induced a custom not common anywhere else, which is for all the officers to be spared out of the ships to reside on shore. Myself, the two Forsters and Mr. Sparrman took up our abode with Mr. Brandt, a gentleman well known to the English by his obliging readiness to serve them. My first care after my arrival was to procure some fresh baked bread, fresh meat, greens, and wine for those who remained on board, and being provided every day during our stay with those articles, they were soon restored to their usual strength. We had only three men on board whom it was thought necessary to send on shore for the recovery of their health, and for these I procured quarters at the rate of half a crown per day, for which they were provided with victuals, drink and lodging." Van der Stel's old hospital falling to ruins was propped up; and materials were being collected for another which afterwards became the barracks in Cape Town. In 1770 the large graveyard round the church on the Herrengeracht was closed, and a new one opened between the Lion Mountain and the shore of the Bay.

The French traveller Le Vaillant in 1780 gives an unfriendly, but most interesting account of the Cape. He tells us of the hard life of the man who hoisted the signal on the Lion Hill when ships were in sight. The monument

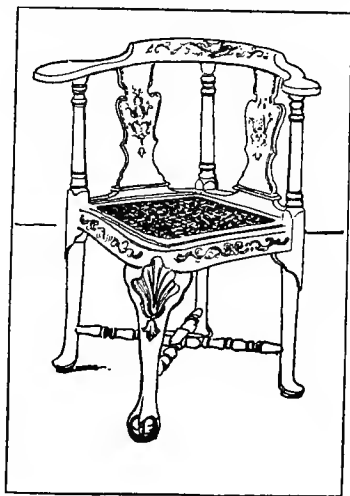
## OLD CAPE COLONY

placed on the Lion Hill in 1680 by Governor-General van Goens, and shown in some of the old prints of Table Bay, had disappeared, but the elaborate system of signalling from the same place continued. At a watch-house on the side of the mountain were two men perpetually on the look-out for ships. Directly a ship showed on the horizon one of these men mounted the hill, pulling himself up and down the steep rock by ropes, and fired a cannon, pointing with his arms to the ship's course. At this the second man ran to the Fort and announced the arrival. When the ships hailed from Europe or from Holland, usually between the months of January and June, the flag of Holland or the Prince of Orange was run up on the hill within sight of the sea. For vessels returning from India particular flags were shown, known only to the chief officers of the Company and the captains of the fleet. These signified that the Cape, in those precarious times, was still in the hands of the Dutch. If the fleet carried an officer of higher standing than the Governor of the Cape, a salute was fired from the Castle.

The interior of the houses in Cape Town, says Le Vaillant, showed no marks of frivolous luxury. "All the furniture is in simple and noble taste. There are no tapestries, and a few paintings or mirrors form the principal ornaments." The artistic Frenchman alone of the many writers

## MEN AND HOUSES

on Table Bay mentions the really beautiful Colonial furniture. The genius of Holland is always that of detail, and the Dutchman was *par excellence* the cabinet-maker of Europe. Even before the advent of William III there were Dutch cabinet-makers in England, and much of the seventeenth and eighteenth century

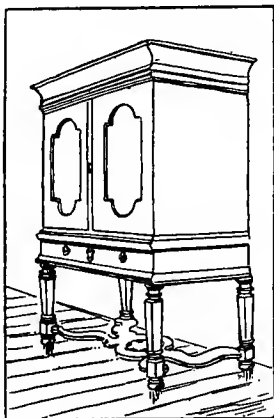


OLD COLONIAL-MADE CHAIR.

work of the two countries is extraordinarily alike. I think all the fine *ébenistes* of France in the time of Louis XIV were of Dutch or Flemish origin, and though they wrought after the French style, there is often, especially amongst the earlier work, a distinctly ungallic flavour. Portugal is

## OLD CAPE COLONY

said to have brought into Europe Indo-Portuguese furniture from the Indies. But it seems to date from the time when Holland also had a footing abroad, and if so, this so-called Indo-Portuguese might equally, if not better, be called Indo-Dutch. The pattern of the furniture made and carved at the Cape by Javanese and Indian prisoners for the Dutch officials is very much of the same



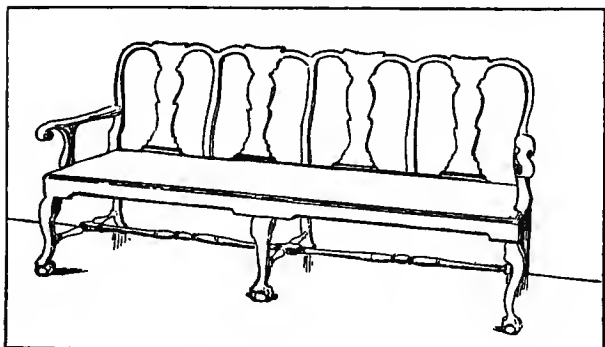
VERY OLD COLONIAL MADE ARMOIRE.

description, and chairs and settees of the kind were made for the Dutch at Surat, Nagapatam and elsewhere. Even before the English Company the Hollanders brought clocks and corner cupboards to the East to be lacquered, but I never saw any of this work at the Cape, where, with

## MEN AND HOUSES

the exception of those seats made by the exiles in Robben Island in elaborately carved ebony, the work is for the most part characteristically Dutch.

A very old Colonial made *armoire* in a beautiful house in Cape Town resembles the design of a Flemish *armoire* in South Kensington Museum, dated 1534. Seats are often very like the early eighteenth century English country-made fur-

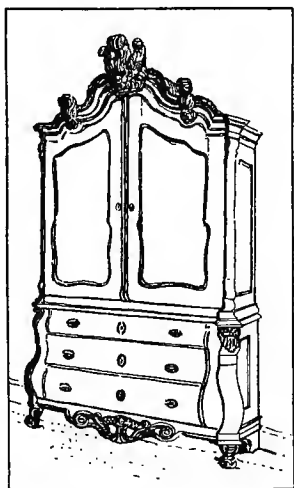


OLD COLONIAL BENCH IN "STINK-WOOD."

niture. In the teak wall cupboards of the farms and the "stink-wood" and "yellow-wood" wardrobes you get more or less the characteristic gable outline, which was quite traditional in furniture. I have noticed it in a cupboard for holding workshop tools, in a sixteenth century wood engraving. Indeed I think it is quite likely that the Cape craftsman may have refreshed his

## OLD CAPE COLONY

memory of the gables at home by studying the outlines of his furniture models. Much of the furniture is inlaid in ebony, and the materials "yellow-wood" and "stink wood" (so called from the strong smell of the wood when it is freshly cut) mark the work as essentially Colonial made. There is no doubt a certain element of French



ARMOIRE IN "STINK-WOOD" AND "YELLOW-WOOD."

influence, and as Frenchmen emigrated through the Netherlands into England at exactly the same date that the refugee Frenchmen emigrated to the Cape, it is not strange that the cabinet makers in all these places should have worked on similar lines. I have heard of elaborately

## MEN AND HOUSES

carved bedsteads in Cape Colony and other work of a more distinctively French kind, but I never saw any myself.

At the time of Le Vaillant French influence was greatly feared both by the Orange and anti-revolutionary party in Holland and at the Cape. Writing rather bitterly, the traveller tells us that "all the ladies play upon the harpsichord, which is their sole accomplishment . . . strangers . . . are generally well received, but the English are adored, and in less than eight days everything in the house where they have fixed their choice becomes English: the master, the mistress, and even the children. The French are greatly disliked, and they say," he adds, "that they would rather be taken by the English than owe their safety to the French."

Admiral Stavorinus, in 1798, asserted that the women were more witty and lively than the men, who spent most of their time indoors smoking tobacco and loitering up and down the house. Englishmen," he said, "who care not for their money," spent it in procuring the ladies all kinds of diversion, and therefore were much liked. However this may be, the feeling was not universal. There was a republican party at Table Bay which strongly sympathised with the French, and already in 1782 two French regiments had been asked for and were stationed at Good Hope. A certain architectural influence seen in

## OLD CAPE COLONY

some of the decorated windows in Cape Town is said to have come in at this time.

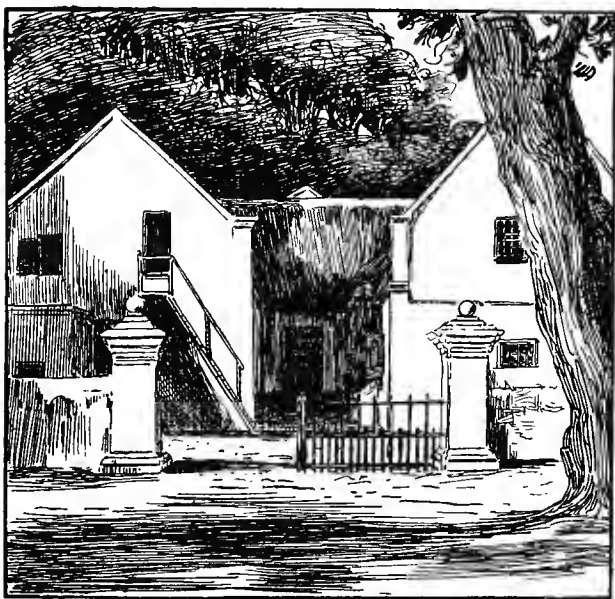
Three years later Cornelis de Graff arrived as Governor. He established the Drostdy of Graff Reinett. The Colony was rent with internal troubles, and ten years later again the new district threw over the Company's rule, and Swellendam at the same time drove away their Landdrost and formed themselves into a republic. The political situation in Europe was complex. The Stadtholder had fled to England, and the Netherlands were in possession of France. Holland was renamed the Batavian Republic. At this juncture the Dutch Company accepted the offer of help made by the English ambassador, and an English fleet sailed for Table Bay in order to ensure its neutrality, armed with authority from the Prince of Orange and the Dutch East India Company to protect the Cape against the victorious arms of the French Republic. There was a skirmish along the coast at Muizenburg, and a peace signed at the old Company's House of Rustenburg.

For the nine following years the Colony was under England, and the old Company's rule at an end. Every man might, in the words of the official "letter" to the Swellendam rebels, buy of whom he pleased, sell to whom he pleased, employ whom he pleased, and come and go when and where he chose, by land or by water. But



## MEN AND HOUSES

sympathy with the arms and politics of France was most carefully watched. Theal tells us that Mr. Hendrick Oostwald Eckstein of Bergvliet, a farm lying between Wynberg and Muizenburg, sent invitations to his daughter's wedding written



BERGVLIET.

in French, and addressed to his "citizen friends." When this came to official ears a party of dragoons was immediately ordered to "proceed to the festive company of citizens," and Mr. Eckstein had to go to Government House to apologize,

## OLD CAPE COLONY

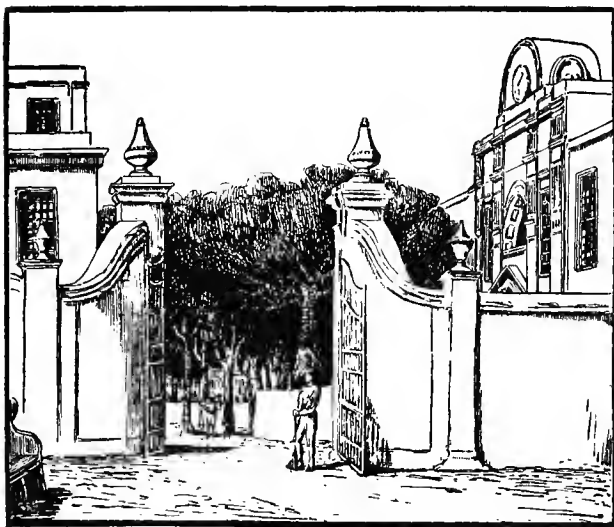
and to sign a bond for a thousand pounds with the security of two substantial persons as an earnest of future good behaviour.

A list of the old Company's outposts taken at this time mentions "Visser's Hoek" on the edge of the Koeberg district, probably named after the Company's officer, T. Visser. The walls and fine old gateposts still stand, though the old house is gone. The white enclosure and houses of "Plaat Klip" or Klocf, still show against the hill of Tygerberg in view of Cape Town. At the post of Klapmuts no house remains. That at the "Oude Biquas Land" is evidently the site of the Drosdty near Roodezaand Pass. The post of "Kirstenbosch," called no doubt after Kirsten, Junior Merchant in 1763, and Company's Resident in False Bay about 1780, lies under Table Mountain. The ruins of the Hout Bay Post, are still to be seen. The "Post of Witteboom," is a well known farm near Constantia: beautiful and poetic sites all. The other Company's outposts were at Oliphants Rivier, Zoetmelks Vallei, near the river Zonderend, Swellendam, Mussel Bay, Saldanah Bay, and Plettenbergs Bay. The old limekiln and the remains of one of the Company's mills are on the stretch of sand, within sight of the Castle, where so many ships were wrecked; and the "two great magazines for corn and oil situated next the Lutheran Church," are old-world

## MEN AND HOUSES

touches in the terribly new and vulgar development of modern Cape Town.

At this time the graveyard round the church in Adderley Street was cut up, and streets laid out on it. Sir George Young placed his slave lodge there, and a theatre was built in Riebeeck Square. The slave lodge, re-modelled, now contains



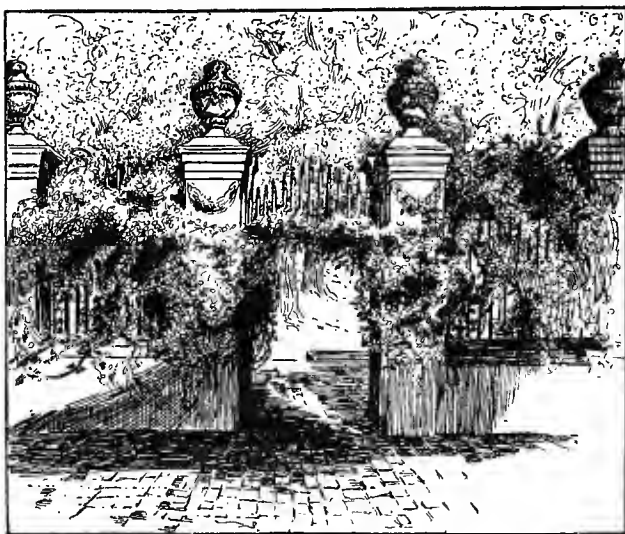
THE OLD GATE TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE AND THE SLAVE LODGE BEYOND.

the Supreme Courts of Justice, the Treasury, and other offices. I give an illustration, taken from an old water-colour, of the gate of Government House in the beginning of the nineteenth century. A suggestion was made, I am told

## OLD CAPE COLONY

—with what correctness I do not know—by Mr. J. Hofmeyer, of restoring it, but the plan has not been carried out. Beyond the gate is seen the slave lodge and the tree-bordered canal.

In 1801 the colony was given back, as promised, to the Dutch. Commissioner de Mist was sent



STELLENBERG GATE.

out as Governor; he who gave to the two ports of Table and False Bay the poetic title of "Hosts of the Indian Ocean Tavern." He lived at Stellenberg, the beautiful eighteenth century house at Wynberg, at the back of which once ran the track or thoroughfare from Cape Town

## MEN AND HOUSES

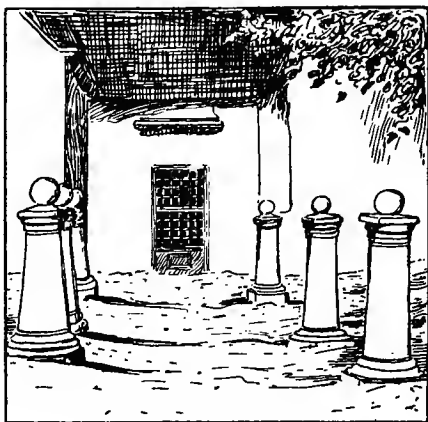
to Constantia. It is a very old farm granted by Van der Stel to Jacob Vogel in 1697 on condition that Vogel should plant trees, especially oaks; and his oaks thrive to this day. Vogel was to yield a tenth part of his corn to the Company. We hear of him in 1703 paying 9,800 florins for the right to tap and sell the Company's wine, and to lease the imported beer. But the original house was entirely burnt down in 1710.

Commissioner de Mist was not long in residence. All Europe was menaced by the great Napoleon. The fall of Table Bay, the key to India, was too important to leave in doubt. In 1805 Trafalgar had been fought and the Russians defeated at Austerlitz. In 1806 Louis Napoleon was placed on the throne of Holland. There was no time to lose. General Baird, in the beginning of the same year, landed with his men at Saldanah Bay, marched towards the Cape and fought with General Janssens in the Blauwberg hills, a desolate coast tract where even on a summer's day the wind seems chill, and the loose white sand gathers into eddies like driven snow, or is tossed into a solid stinging spray. The whole story is too well known to tell again. Janssens, short of food, short of clothing, with none who could be counted on, signed the capitulation on January 18, 1806.

Nineteenth century dawned late in this land of the Southern hemisphere. Intellectual tastes

## OLD CAPE COLONY

were not highly developed, and at quite a late date there was only one attempt at a library in Cape Town: a house near the church which had a few volumes looked after by the sexton. In the country, gabled houses after the old pattern, some of them the most beautiful, were built after this. Tokai, built on part of old Governor Van der Stel's grazing land, an old home of the



LITTLE TERRACE AT TOKAI.

Ekstein family, with its vine-trellised loggia, roofed bell tower, odd little terrace behind, was probably one of these later houses. The land was first granted to Andreas Ranch by Rhenius in 1792, and to Petrus Michael Ekstein by Sir J. F. Craddock in 1814. Early writers speak a good deal of the cavern in the Prinz Kasteel

## MEN AND HOUSES

Mountain above, discussing whether its formation is natural or artificial. The property is now taken over by Government, and has a beautiful plantation and nursery of trees.

And Cape Town. A mist of romance and poetry hangs over the old historic seaport. How familiar it all seems: the old lazy hospitable life, where the long dinner tables might be daily set for thirty guests, and sedan chairs plied to and fro down the ill-paved streets. (Such practical jokes, too, were played with these sedan chairs. One was to remove the foot-boards so that the victim, hastily decoyed inside, was scurried along with his feet in the mud, the slave carriers laughing like children until they cried.) At one of the old boarding houses of Strand Street were quaint inscriptions (such as "Lovely and charming Miss Riden, 1813") cut on some of the windows. The French astronomer, De La Caille, stayed there when he came to Cape Town to obtain the terrestrial measurement of the arc of the meridian; his gnomon and meridian line were on the wall, and Sir Thomas Maclear used to make visits to look at it. I saw the house being pulled down a few years ago. From Strand Street to the Parade you passed over a bridge of brick and stone. I hope, despite all alterations, that Van Riebeeck's coat-of-arms will be left upon the Town Hall. It was placed there, I think, by Commissioner de Mist, who

## OLD CAPE COLONY

would have liked the town called Riebeeck Stad, and before the fine new statue presented by Mr. Rhodes, it was the only memorial of the



HALL AT STELLENBERG.

first Commander. Public offices were still in the "Castle," and though the "Company's garden" was dilapidated and neglected, the menagerie



## MEN AND HOUSES

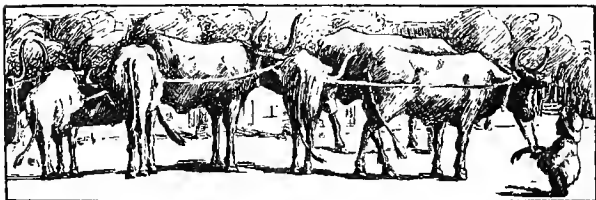
was a feature of the place. How many of us have been delighted in our youth with the adventures there of the wicked Tommy of Marryat's *Masterman Ready*?

Canals still ran down the Herrengracht (Adderley Street), Bergh Street (St. George's Street), New Street, Waal Street, Bree Street. But they bred mosquitoes, and the canal of Riebeeck Square, fed by rain water, was terrible in summer, so they had to go, with many another thing, better and worse. How many descriptions one has read of the quiet streets, planted with stone pines and oaks, where business was transacted in the warehouses, and never a sign of trade or bustle appeared. Of the slaves returning in a procession with fuel from the mountain at nightfall, and the ostriches wandering home like cattle in the evening. Of the fine old houses in Lower Strand Street, where boarded the rich merchants, and the military folk on half-pay and sick leave from India, with their ostentation and their curries and their turbaned servants, and all the local colour men brought back in those days from the far East. Yet as I look, each special figure falls into the kaleidoscope of years, and against the radiating mountain pass the men of more than three centuries; the leather-jerkined sailor of the sixteenth century filling his water casks on the wild sea-shore; the kindly imperturbable farmer in

## OLD CAPE COLONY

his ready-made clothes, gazing into the plate-glass shop windows.

What a crowd of people walk down the road ! Old van Riebeeck in his silk stockings ; Van der Stel, keen and courteous ; Captain Cook, stretching himself after a long sea voyage, or at his window cutting his signature with a diamond ring—the pane of glass was there a few years ago ; Clive ; the gallant figure of young Wellington, his face bronzed by an Indian sun ; Dutch skippers ; Englishmen in the service of John Company—can you not see them all ?



THE END.

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# INDEX



## INDEX

### A

Aan het Pad, 157  
 d'Abeling, 123, 132, 247  
 Alphen, 278  
 Appel, F., 114  
 As, van, 136, 282  
 Assenburgh, Gov., van, 137,  
 254

### B

Baird, Gen., 305  
 Bange Hoek, 185  
 Batavia, 19, 73, 81  
 Baviaan's Kloof, 261  
 Bek, Rev. H., 198, 258  
 Benozzi, Pierre, 188  
 Berg Olaf, 89  
 Berg River, 111, 194  
 Bergvliet, 301  
 Bethliem, 187  
 Bien Donné, 195  
 Birds, Capé, 51, 168, 215

Blauwberg, 156, 305  
 Blesius, The Fiscal, 148, 195,  
 251  
 Bochenhout's Kloof, 203  
 Bokkeveld, 221, 276  
 Boschendal, 190  
 Boscheuval, 252  
 Boshof, 284  
 Bottelary, The, 162  
 Brandsolder, 59  
 Brandt, 293  
 Bricks, imported, 30, 58, 147,  
 245  
 Burgundy Farm, 202

### C

Camphor trees, 140  
 Canal, The, 24, 270, 309  
 Cape Town, Old streets of,  
 243, 270, 307 *et seq.*  
 Castle, The, 46, 67, 96, 137  
 Castle, founding of, 38

# INDEX

Ceres, 223

Chavonnes, Gen. de, 256

Church, Old Cape Town, 105

130, 271

Cloete, 62, 64, 107, 178

Coinage, 229 *et seq.*

Company, the Dutch East

India, *see* Dutch East

India Company

Company's Posts, 43, 50, 302

Constantia, 55 *et seq.*, 114

Constantia Wine, 56

Cook, Capt., 292

Cronje, 255

## D

Dauphiné, 199, 202

De Chavonnes, Gen. de, 256

De Lanoy, 191

De Waal, Capt., 279

De Wet, 149

De Vos, 136, 153

Drakenstein District, 74, 76,

185 *et seq.*

Drakenstein, van Rheeде tot,

Lord of Mydrecht, 52, 170

Dutch East India Company,

21, 230, 247, 249, 300

Du Toit, 157, 178

## E

Eerste River, 167

Elsenburg, 150

Elsjes Kraal, 150

Elzevir, Secunde Sieur S.

48, 89, 116, 130, 150

Enzaamheid, de, 158

## F

Fontaine, La, 258

Fort, The, 23, 38 *et seq.*, 244

Frenchhoek, 185 *et seq.*

French language, 198

Furniture, 211, 294 *et seq.*

## G

Garden, The Company's, 23,

27, 68, 278, 308

Gardiol, J., 136, 203

Genadendal, 261

Goens, Gov.-Gen. van, 49, 50,

170

Good Hope Farm, 187

Gratitude, La, 170

Grevenbroeck, 111

Graff, C. de, 300

Graff, Reinett, 300

Groote Schuur, 28, 257



# INDEX

## H

Hazendaal, 230, 282  
 Heerengracht, 271, 293, 309  
 Helderberg, 153  
 Hinlopen, 44  
 Hoorn, Gov.-Gen. van, 252  
 Hospital, The, 46, 82, 245  
 Hottentots Holland, 76, 261  
 Houts Bay, 302  
 Huguenots, The, 71, 74, 86,

298

Husing, H., 114, 119, 155,

209

Husing, Mrs., 122

## I

Idas Vallei, 178

## J

Janssens, Gen., 156, 305

Jonkers Hoek, 178

Jordaan, 136

## K

Kalden, 89, 116, 130, 152

Karroopoort, 222

Kat, The, 47

Keerweder, 205

Kirstenbosch, 202

Klapmuts, 36, 43, 302

Klastenberg, 260

Koornhoop, 28

Kotze (or Coetzée), 106, 136,  
 150, 178

Kuils River, or The Cuylen,  
 50, 76, 150, 167

## L

La Cotte, 199, 201, 203

La Fontaine, 258

La Gratitude, 170

Le Boucq, Rev. E. F., 122

Leeuwfontein, 220

Lekkerwyn, 192

Le Sueur, Rev. F., 258

Libertas, 154

Loon, van, 101

Loots, The, 273

Louw, 136

## M

Malherbe, 136

Malmesbury, 261

Map, from Tachard, 70; old  
 districts and modern roads,  
 84

Mauritius, 34, 44, 105, 173

# INDEX

- Meerlant, J. van, 114, 158  
 Meerlust (Drakenstein), 194  
 Meerlust (Eerste River), 120, 155  
 Melk, Martin, 152, 273  
 Metal work, 59, 81, 172, 193  
 Mist, Commissioner de, 304  
 Moddergat, 158  
 Morgenster, 264  
 Mowbray, 285  
 Muizenburg, 280, 300  
 Myburgh, 156  
 Mydrecht, *see* Drakenstein  
 Parel Vallei, 115, 153  
 Parsonage, Lutheran, 274  
 Papagaai Berg, 176  
 Plaate Kloof, 302  
 Plans of houses, 57, 147, 190  
 Plettenburg, van, 277, 282, 286  
 Population at various periods, 31, 71, 100  
 Porcelain, Oriental, 193, 205, 239  
 "Post office" stone, 18  
 Pretorius, 160  
 Prinsloo, 136, 291

## N

- Noot, van, 212, 236, 258

## O

- O.V.C. monogram, 230, 249  
 Oliphants Hoek, 199  
 Oliphants Kop, 149  
 Oortman, N., 251

## P

- Paarde Vlei, 115, 153  
 Paarde Berg, 115  
 Paarl, 36, 209

## Q

- Querellen, M. de, 23

## R

- Rheede, Lt. A. van, 251  
 Rhone and Languedoc, 188  
 Riebeeck, J. van, 23, 37, 272, 307  
 Robben Island, 86, 205, 234  
 Rondebosch, 28  
 Roodebloem, 100  
 Roodezand, 101, 107, 217, 302

# INDEX

- Rotterdam, Jan, 110, 162, 251  
 Roux, 136, 195, 203  
 Rustenberg, 28, 35  
 Steyn, 255  
 Sumptuary Laws, 269  
 Swellendam, 261, 300  
 Swellengrebel, 259

## S

- Sabatier, Pierre, 188  
 Saldanah, 32, 200, 239, 302  
 Savoye, J. de, 79, 194  
 Schoongezigt, 185  
 Seventeen, The, 21  
 Sheik, Joseph, 163  
 Shipwrecks, 231 *et seq.*  
 Simond, 76, 79, 194  
 Simondium, 194  
 Simon's Bay, 98, 239  
 Simon's Berg, 187  
 Simonstown, 278  
 Six, W., 44, 219  
 Six, J., 44  
 Slave Lodge, Sir G. Younge's,  
 303

- Slaves, 30, 31, 102, 170, 255  
 Snijman, C., 197  
 Starrenberg, J., 111, 116  
 Stel, van der, *see* van der  
 Stel  
 Stellenberg, 304  
 Stellenbosch, 46, 76, 111, 167

## T

- Tachard, Père, 67  
 Tas, Adam, 112, 134, 154  
 Thatching, 25, 58  
 Theron, J., 220  
 Tohai, 306  
 Tree planting, 88, 98, 101,  
 250  
 Trikop, 285  
 Tulbagh Drostdy, 217, 302  
 Tulbagh, Ryk, 269, 274  
 Tulbagh Town, 218  
 Tulp, 30, 44  
 Tygerberg, 37

## U

- Ubiquas, 101, 217, 276, 302

## V

- Valkenberg, 149  
 Valkenier, Commissioner, 52,  
 99, 134, 149

# INDEX

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| van der Byl, 111, 148, 159             | Vrede en lust, 195           |
| van der Heyden, J., 136, 157           | Vredenberg, 159              |
| van der Merwe, 136, 220                |                              |
| van der Stel, Cornelis, 44, 236        |                              |
| van der Stel, Franz, 44, 116,          | W                            |
| 126                                    |                              |
| van der Stel, Hendrik, 140             | Wagonmakers Valley, 97       |
| van der Stel, Lodewyk, 51,             | Waveren, Land of, 101, 217,  |
| 112                                    | 219                          |
| van der Stel, Simon, 39 <i>et seq.</i> | Waveren, Lord of, 52, 219    |
| van der Stel, Adriaan, 44, 113         | Welgelegen, 285              |
| van der Stel, W. A., 44, 89,           | Wellington, 97               |
| 95 <i>et seq.</i> ; accusation of,     | Welmoed, 160                 |
| 119, <i>et seq.</i> ; defence of,      | Wine, 27, 56, 190, 248       |
| 132                                    | Witteboom, 248, 302          |
| Vergelegen, 114, 116, 124              | Wynberg, 27, 44, 54, 96, 304 |
| <i>et seq.</i>                         |                              |
| Vergenoegd, 161                        | Z                            |
| Villiers, de, 79, 136, 201             | Zandvliet, 152               |
| Vogel, J., 136, 305                    | Zwaanswijk, 124              |
| Vos, de, 136, 153                      | Zwaartland, 261              |







